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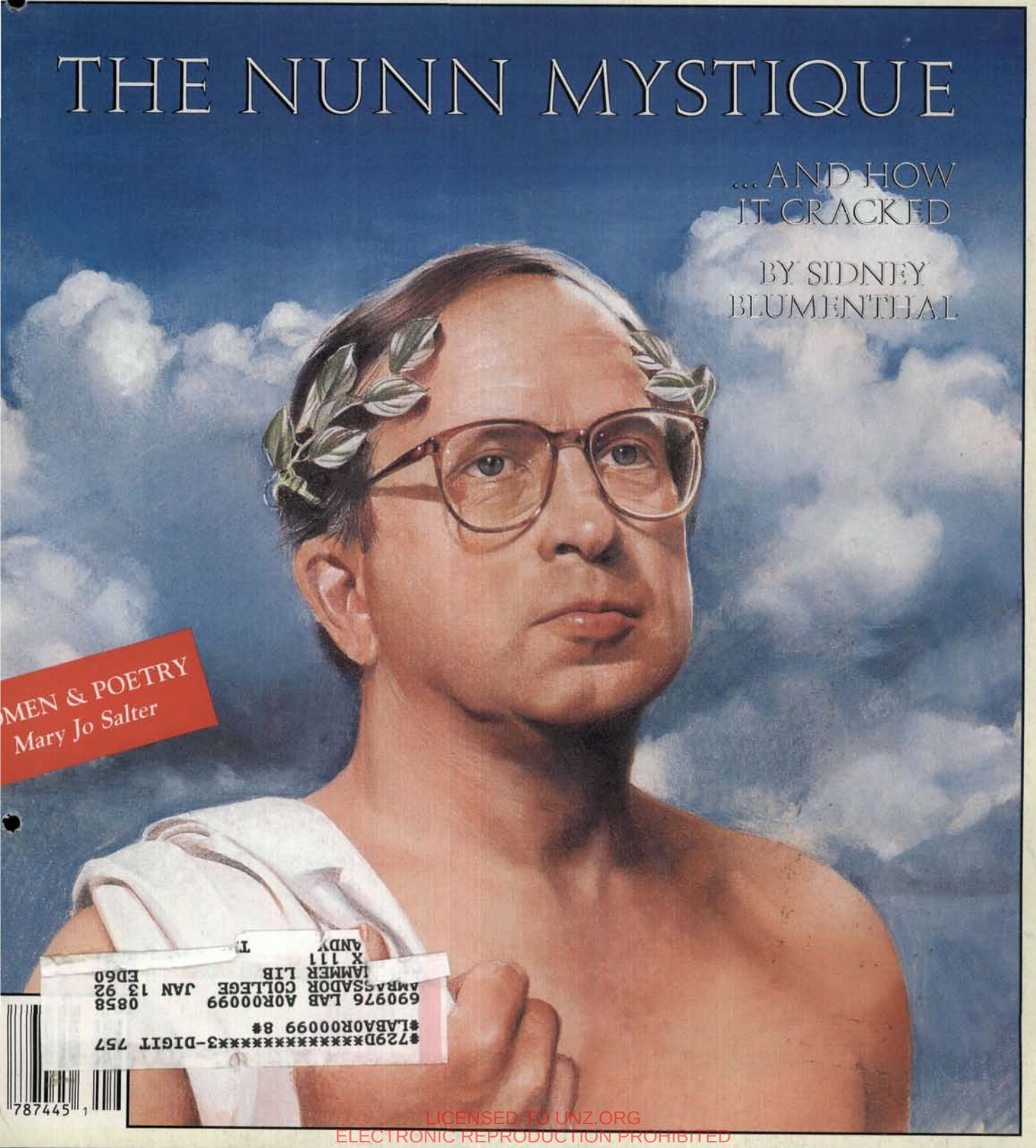

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Weekly Journal of Opinion

MARCH 4, 1991

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 3,972

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 204, Number 9, Issue 3,972, March 4, 1991. (Printed in the U.S. on February 13, 1991.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 7 & 14, July 15 & 22, Aug. 19 & 26, and Sept. 16 & 23, 1991) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). ©1991 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

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FROM WASHINGTON

Unilateral disarmament

GI Joe comes back from the war feeling like a hero, only to find that some stay-at-home shirker has stolen his gal and his job. What the heck was he fighting for? When the Persian Gulf war is over, the whole country may sink into this kind of B-movie sulk when it looks around to discover that while we were liberating Kuwait, Japan was continuing its inexorable economic climb. That will surely generate renewed demands that we launch a few Patriots against incoming Japanese products.

Chrysler's Lee Iacocca, writing in *The New York Times* on February 10, says that although he actually stands for "the commonsense approach of managing trade in the country's self-interest," he no longer minds the dirty label of "protectionist." The inevitable fatuous comparison: we protect our interests in the Gulf—"what is so wrong with protecting our interests at home?" Anyway, "Demanding reciprocity from our trade partners, and retaliating if we don't get it, doesn't undermine free trade, it defends free trade."

Iacocca (or whoever wrote the piece for him) thus fudges, like most protectionists, whether what he really wants is mutual disarmament or rearmament on our side for its own sake. Does he think trade restrictions are a necessary threat, to be acted upon with regret, or a positive good? "If we copied Japan's example," he writes, "we would revitalize our auto industry . . . by shutting out all foreign cars." As it happens, we tried protectionism (import quotas) to revitalize our auto industry in the 1980s—at Iacocca's hectoring insistence. If the industry still needs to be revitalized, I guess it didn't work.

Free trade purists (I'm one) believe that open borders are the best route to national prosperity no matter what policy other countries pursue. Even "strategic trade" theorists—sophisticated protectionists who believe that nations can gain a competitive advantage in certain industries by protecting their home markets—agree that mutual free trade would be best for all, if it could be worked out.

But even free trade purists recognize that the other guy's trade barriers are harmful to us. (The debate is whether they're also harmful to him.) And free traders, though generally cocksure, have no pat answer to the "crowbar" argument: the only way to get the other guy to lower his trade barriers is to threaten—or, if necessary, to implement—our own. Trade war, like real war, is mutually disadvantageous but sometimes necessary to establish a principle when threats fail to deter. That's the argument.

The trouble with the crowbar theory is that it's too convenient for phonies like Lee Iacocca who really want trade barriers for their own sake. The "playing field" will never be "level" enough to satisfy them, and meanwhile our own protectionism harms us.

For example, the Commerce Department is about to impose stiff duties on imports of Japanese display screens for portable computers because the Japanese supposedly are "dumping" these items in our market. Dumping is usually defined as selling something in a foreign market for less than at home. That isn't happening here. But Commerce claims that computer screen prices are artificially low in Japan as well. So it is trying to prove that screens are selling in both countries for less than they cost to produce. The explanation of why the wily Japanese should wish to do this is essentially a variation on the old huckster's joke about losing on every sale but making it up in volume. As for why selling Americans something for less than it costs should be considered a punishable offense . . . don't ask.

American computer makers say that American-made screens aren't even available, because the American screen industry was concentrating on military products while the Japanese were investing billions in the commercial market. True or not, the unavoidable result of an import duty on screens will be to make American computers more expensive compared with foreign ones. By helping the screen industry, we hurt the computer industry. Of course we could then help the computer industry with an import duty, thus hurting industries that buy computers. And so on.

What we need, I sometimes think, is a way to punish foreign trade restrictions that doesn't punish us as well. It is sometimes suggested that we ought to "link" (favorite geopol word these days) our defense of nations like Japan and Germany with better trade behavior. If "better behavior" means simply buying more from us whether or not their citizens want

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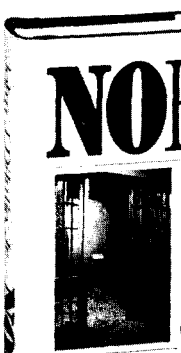

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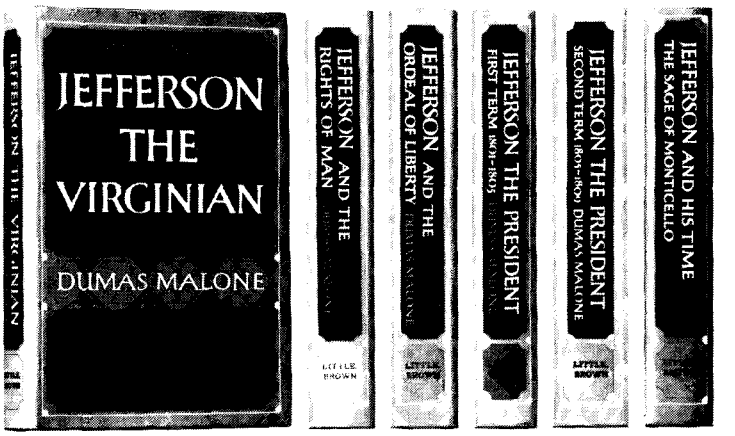

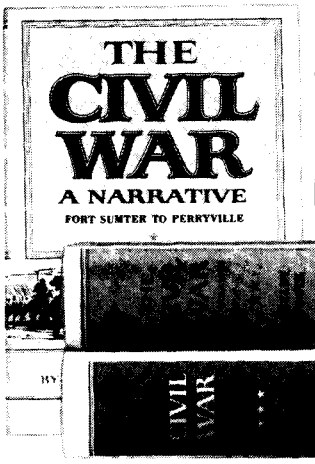

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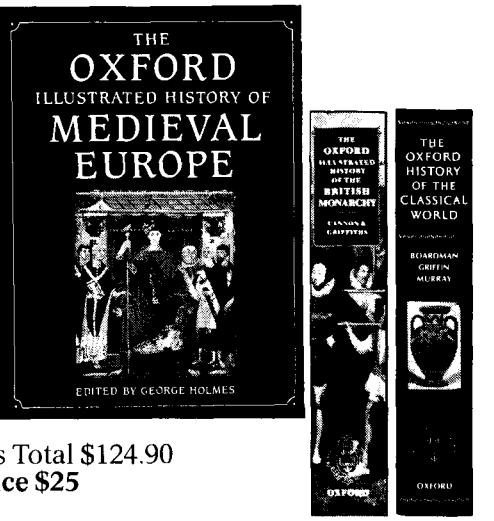

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CORRESPONDENCE

Culture schlock

To the editors:

In "Roll Over Beethoven" (February 4), Edward Rothstein makes yet another reactionary argument for the superiority of Western culture and its art. It is, he asserts, the only culture on the face of the globe that posits a "transcendental" objective point from which all art can be defined and then judged. Mr. Rothstein then asks, "How can cultures be compared once a standpoint outside them all is rejected?" and criticizes the idea of "a submission to the systems of judgment employed by the culture being studied."

How dare those impudent multiculturalists suggest that we try to understand another culture on its own terms, as it understands itself? In fact, Mr. Rothstein's "transcendental" point of judgment is entirely culture-bound, heavily laden with the political baggage of the "heritage of liberalism" and the "energies of modernity" and their ideology of scientific "objectivity" and "impartiality." Like most apologists for cultural (and political) imperialism, Mr. Rothstein reverses cause and effect in order to justify Western domination. He states that the "impulse to universality helps explain why the West has been so open to the possibilities of other cultures." In reality, the West's brutal "opening" of other cultures and the imposition of its culture upon the globe have made possible its arrogant assumption that the Truths of its culture are universal, while those of other cultures are simply degraded variants. Mr. Rothstein points to the popularity of European classical music around the world as evidence of its universality, without considering the pattern of imperialism, in which the conquered culture adopts that of the conqueror.

CLYDE MONEYHUN
Arlington, Texas

Gasbags

To the editors:

Both "After Saddam" (February 4) and "War of Nerves" (February 11) deal admirably with many aspects of the Gulf war but do not mention the essential core of the problem: the failure of Americans to confront their obscene consumption of gasoline.

The world's annual production of oil is roughly 21 billion barrels. This nation consumes about 6 billion; of this, two-thirds is used to make gasoline and diesel fuel. Americans use about four times as much motor fuel, per capita, as Europeans—that's 15 percent of world oil (3 billion barrels) more than Europe consumes.

We attempt to excuse this—the U.S. is bigger, Americans have a "love affair" with their cars, etc. The reality is that we have a welfare state benefiting middle-class motorists and the trucking industry. Automobiles and trucks are intrinsically high-cost modes of transportation; the trouble is, the user escapes much of this cost. Costs are either "fixed" or subsidized. The only operative market force that restrains automobile use is the negligible cost of fuel. Result: competing modes of transportation are bankrupted to the enormous disadvantage of practically everyone.

The larger effect of this annual 3-billion-barrel waste is obvious: the world price of oil is probably 25 percent higher than it would be otherwise, and OPEC nations are permitted geopolitical excesses of behavior. Saddam Hussein was given an unnatural importance because he commanded 10 percent of the world's oil reserves. He has also been furnished with billions that originated with the filling of our cars at the local gas station. We now understand how he uses these funds.

STANLEY HART
Altadena, California

Revised, revised

To the editors:

In her Washington Diarist on the "curriculum revision craze" ("Revise, Revise," January 28), Ann Hulbert reprinted a quote from *The Los Angeles Times* that had me saying, "I'm not interested in whether anybody ever reads *Romeo and Juliet*." I don't subscribe to that remark, and it wasn't quite the remark I made. In a phone interview I told the *L.A. Times* reporter that I am against compelling *everybody* to read *Romeo and Juliet*. In context, "everybody" meant "all undergraduates" and was in answer to the reporter's query about what ten books all undergraduates should be made to read.

The reporter was disappointed to hear me say that the writings *everybody* should be made to read are very few; that those few texts should be read before arrival at college, because not everyone goes to college; and that students who do go are chronological adults who have come to college for diverse reasons. I quoted Blake at her: "One law for lion and ox is oppression."

I am just as bored as Ms. Hulbert is by faculty debates designed to herd future English majors, engineers, and Russian majors against their will into required courses to gratify the faculty's moral sense at the expense of undergraduate freedom. It's the job of faculty members to interest undergraduates in reading important books, not to compel all of them uniformly to do so.

E. D. HIRSCH JR.
Charlottesville, Virginia

Humane relations

To the editors:

Your Notebook item "Cross Porpoises" (February 4) is mistaken in the assumption that watching dolphins perform antics in an aquarium is an "educational" experience or that conditions "inside the joint" can be made humane (or whatever the proper term is). Dolphins, like whales, are sonic animals that make their way about the ocean in a manner that life in an aquarium does not permit. They are also social animals who live in cooperative communities. Life in an aquarium for such an animal is like life in a cage for a human being. You might keep the cage clean and the inmate well-fed, but the limitations of cage-life cannot be made humane. Indeed, these animals often suffer so much stress (acquiring gastric and intestinal ulcers) that they are sometimes kept alive with forced feedings and drugs.

Jacques Cousteau has stated that such animals are always abnormal in behavior. He and his son have opened an ocean museum in Paris that, in place of captured animals, features high-tech exhibits. Wouldn't this do for education and entertainment?

ROBERTA KALECHOFSKY
Marblehead, Massachusetts

The writer is president of Jews for Animal Rights.

Birth marks

To the editors:

An item in your February 11 Notebook indicates that my views about American demographics have been inconsistent.

In 1974, in *The Real America*, I wrote that American fertility rates were coming down dramatically from very high baby boom levels. Accordingly, I wrote that we had little to worry about regarding a population explosion, and that smaller families yield higher per

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MARCH 4, 1991

UNSHIFTING SANDS

For many Americans the sight and sound of demonstrators in various Arab coalition countries is tantamount to the doom of Operation Desert Storm. Those who argued in the first place against a U.S. military response to Baghdad's aggression now claim that their worst fears about the consequences for Arab-American relations have been borne out. They see nothing but a collapse of the fragile alliance in front of them. For some, there is a degree of dishonesty in this position. Many of these prophets of catastrophe find it hard to conceal their glee that it may actually be coming about; others foresee in it another chance to isolate Israel. But for others still, there is an important, honest worry. Can a fractured Arab world, ordinarily drawn by pieties to the facade of unity, maintain the solidarity and discipline to see the war against Iraq to a successful conclusion? Or are the victory of the coalition and the existence of the coalition diametrically opposed?

We believe they are not. For all the interminable handwringing on television and in the press, what is striking so far is not how many throngs have been mustered in the Arab world, but how few. What has happened is not a wave of outrage but episodic outbursts—the raising of placards in Tunis, a march in Yemen, a rally in Morocco. In the states close to Iraq the Arabs know that the awful fate of the Kuwaitis would likely be theirs if Saddam Hussein were not stopped.

Support for Saddam therefore grows with distance from Saddam. It is tolerated so long as it is a relatively harmless way for disgruntled subjects to let off political steam—and there are plenty of disgruntled subjects in the assorted despotisms and dynasties of the Arab world. Take Morocco, with its recent demonstration of 300,000 in Casablanca. Far from both the Arab and the Muslim center, Moroccans always seem to feel the need to compensate for being on the periphery. The country is politically fractured and, like other Arab states, has no ordered polity in which to redress its grievances. In the absence of constitutional mechanisms for protest, the tension from below is a standing threat to the monarch, King Hassan II, and, from his point of view, is better aimed against a foreign power, such as the United States. The king may now feel culpable for having backed the war against Iraq and having sent 1,500 soldiers to the Gulf—although where they are remains even more mysterious than the other sequestered details of Operation Desert Storm. And Hassan has more or less reneged on his endorsement. The demonstration, therefore, of angry, mostly unemployed youths against a foreign power is not too worrying an event. They will doubtless resume their usual occupation of applying for American visas, when the excitement subsides. The rally is, then, less a sign of a destabilizing foreign coalition than of a stabilizing domestic polity, a staged act in the highly choreographed play of Moroccan politics. We shouldn't overinterpret its ramifications.

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The ructions in Amman are different. First, these people live in Saddam's shadow. But they are not, for the most part, Jordanians: they are largely Palestinians, whose leadership has enrolled them once again into a doomed military adventure. They now cheer the king whose hospitality they have abused. But that is because the king, fearing them as a fifth column, has decided that this time he must be a step ahead of the crowd. The Palestinian crowd is for Iraq not because Iraq has ever done much for the Palestinians (Iraq assassinated Abu Iyad, Yasir Arafat's second-in-command, only a few months ago) but because Saddam Hussein has given them his rhetoric while his Arab enemies have given them only their cash. This is not the first time that the Palestinians have been mesmerized by words and gestures, and not the first time that such mesmerization promises to bring them defeat. Nonetheless, King Hussein's predicament is not unlike King Hassan's. He'd rather the masses mass against his American protector than against himself.

Dissent in Egypt is confined to the narrowly based opposition parties, which are Cairo's feeble gestures to Washington of multiparty government, and to what one Arab scholar calls Egypt's chattering classes. Despite the fragility of its social base, modern Egypt's government is remarkably stable. The power of its young urban poor should not be exaggerated; the most they can do is tie up city traffic for an hour or two. The professional dissidents are also largely impotent. They have opposed every important initiative of government from the disengagement agreement with Israel on Kilometer 101 in 1974 to the joining with the anti-Iraq coalition in 1990. For them opposition is a habit, not a conviction. And, as it happens, the oppositionists agree only on slogans. In the sweep of Egyptian history they are barely footnotes. Since 1805, when Mohammed Ali imposed his New Order on Egypt, this pharaonic state has been ruled by only two regimes: his descendants, and, after 1952, the officer class of Nasser, Sadat, and Mubarak. After nearly two centuries this is not a pattern that will be overthrown by the force of sentimentality toward Saddam Hussein or even of rancor against the United States.

Though in no sense a modern nation-state, Saudi Arabia is, if anything, more stable than Egypt. It may not be able to defend itself against Iraq. But its ruling dynasty is secure against the envy of the dispersed tribes and clans. In 1902, at the age of 20, Abd al-Aziz, later known as Ibn Saud, revived the fortunes and recovered the lost territories of the Al Saud house, on whose throne one of his sons still sits. Today, almost nine decades later, there is still a long line of his sons waiting in the wings to take their turn as monarch; one of them is only 38 years old. This is not a country whose capitulation to ephemeral pan-Arab passions should be casually predicted.

Now, of course, this world is not our world. It may be that Saddam Hussein's sworn enemies will in the end walk in his funeral procession, and they may even seek to please his ghost with words. But dead legends are not as dangerous as living ones, which is why they want him dead and his armies vanquished. Despite this, do not expect them to acknowledge publicly their gratitude to the United States for rescuing them and their countries from his cruel dominion. They may even remonstrate churlishly against the Westerners for this offense or that. After all, Christian soldiers did celebrate Christmas on Islamic soil, the first Christmas in the peninsula. Now matzo is being sent so that Jewish soldiers will be able to observe the Passover, a more laden offense. Some will doubtless exploit these moral enormities.

But in the end it is the course of battle that will determine the future of the Arab-American and the Arab-Western relationship. When Iraq is defeated, it will be the more moderate Arab states that will be in the ascendancy and the murderous ones in retreat. Even the various peoples of Syria will see that there may be alternatives to society organized by terror. In the meantime Hafez Assad, Saddam's brother in Baath brutality, has called for the "liquidation" of the Iraqi tyrant. Certainly in the short run this liquidation would extend Assad's sway rather than curb it. But in Iraq there would be many who would greet Saddam's demise with joy. The Kurds, the remnant Assyrians, and the Shiites, who together make up 75 percent of the population—all victims of his rule—await the outcome of this battle with as much trepidation and certainly more schadenfreude than those other millions of Saddam's Arab "brothers."

NOTEBOOK

WATCH THIS SPACE: Our Race on Campus issue (February 18) seems to have hit a nerve. The responses we have had to date testify to an enormous interest in—and concern about—race relations at colleges around the country. We'll publish some of them in an expanded version of our correspondence column soon. And to help us keep track of the subject in coming months, we invite readers to relate their own experiences, whether they confirm or contest the versions of the situation described by TNR's contributors. We'll find a way to let our readers know about the most interesting cases. Incidentally, copies of the Race on Campus issue are still available from this office. Single copies are $3 plus $1 postage, with a discount for copies bought in bulk ($2.50 each for 10, plus $2 postage, or $2 each for 25 or more, plus $3 postage).

DEPT. OF CLARIFICATION: Some readers were alarmed by our apparent lack of dismay, expressed in last week's Notebook, at the thought that someone might finally "shut [Ed Koch] up." For all the efforts of the p.c. thought police, the likelihood of this happening, we're glad to say, is about as great as our genu-

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ine desire that it should come about. Keep talking, Ed.

APOLOGY: to Michael Gartner of NBC, who somehow became "Murray" in Peter Braestrup's "Censored" (TNR, February 11). •

An invasion blueprint.

OVER THE TOP

By Morton Kondracke

As fears multiply of massive U.S. losses in the land battle for Kuwait, the Pentagon is using various channels to say: done right, it won't be that bad. Without providing any numbers, Pentagon officials say their plans would entail far fewer than the tens of thousands of U.S. casualties Saddam Hussein apparently intends to inflict, and they predict a far shorter battle than the months that pessimists expect. Even sources who persuaded outside critics (like me) to question the advisability of a land war now seem persuaded that it can be carried off devastatingly and swiftly. This may well be wishful thinking, but here is what the plans call for.

Timing of the offensive—if it has even been determined—will remain one of the best-kept secrets in the U.S. government. "The number who know is four," said a Pentagon official, referring to President Bush, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, Joint Chiefs Chairman Colin Powell, and national security adviser Brent Scowcroft. A White House aide confirms that this group met for a half-hour alone on February 12, before other key advisers joined them, including Vice President Dan Quayle, Secretary of State James Baker, and White House chief of staff John Sununu. Cheney and Powell came back from their weekend consultations in Saudi Arabia reportedly persuaded by U.S. commander Norman Schwarzkopf, and especially his deputy, Army General Calvin Waller, that "more time and more air" should be expended to destroy Iraqi defenses. But Pen-'gon sources believe the offensive will begin "sooner, rather than later," probably in February.

Deception and strategic surprise are said to be so much a part of the war plan that it's being spoken of as "the land version of Normandy," where allied forces kept Germany totally confused about the exact point of the World War II landing in France. Similarly, allied forces in Saudi Arabia have begun major movements along the Kuwaiti border to mask the point where a major thrust into enemy territory will take place. Some Pentagon sources say the primary thrust will "almost certainly" be from the west into Kuwait and Iraq, rather than across Kuwait's southern border, but this may be disinformation.

Pentagon officials say that press accounts of basic U.S. strategy—called the "AirLand battle"—are wrong in two respects. Contrary to reports, U.S. commanders have not merely dusted off their war plans designed for defending Europe against Soviet attack, but have significantly altered them to reflect the fact that in the Gulf, allied forces will be on the offensive, not the defensive. Also, officials say, it's not true that "AirLand" will be more air than land. Aircraft are vital to the battle plan, but "there will be a dramatic armored thrust," one official said. "There will be major tank battles."

Several thrusts will be made into Iraqi lines, and there may be amphibious landings and paratroop drops, but the basic strategy is for the allies to pour through a main hole in Iraqi lines and then "very quickly" attack entrenched defensive positions from the flank and rear. The advance will be preceded by waves of B-52 bombers dropping concussion bombs to explode enemy mine fields. A-10 and Harrier jets, plus helicopters, are to clear the enemy away from the edges of the U.S. wedge.

American planners are said to be worried about two particular Iraqi strengths: their elite combat engineers and their artillery. Contrary to some press reports, officials say, Iraq does not fight according to Soviet military doctrine, but according to its own, developed during the war with Iran. The Iraqis invited Iranian forces to advance toward heavily fortified positions, and when they were stopped, pulverized them with long-range artillery. They also built extensive road networks behind their dug-in tank positions to allow combat engineers and artillery to move quickly to the Iranian attack point.

Iraqi engineers now are equipped with huge, half-block-long Japanese earth-moving machines to construct roads and create small sand mountains in front of advancing allied forces, and they have South African G-5 and G-6 long-range artillery to rain down on attacking forces. During the time remaining before the allied attack, U.S. aircraft will concentrate on bombing these roads, earth-movers, and artillery, as well as tank positions and troop concentrations, Pentagon officials say. "We've done a lot more damage already than we've let on," one Pentagon source said. "During the next couple of weeks we will be doubling our sortie rate in the main area of operations instead of hitting targets all over Iraq. It's beginning now."

A key target remains Saddam Hussein's Republican Guards, which are widely dispersed in heavily fortified positions in southern Iraq. The Pentagon is convinced that it has inflicted heavy damage on the Guards from the air and will do more damage before the ground invasion, but U.S. strategy still anticipates that the Guard can be induced to move from its fortifications into the open, where it can be hit from the air. "The Guard has three choices," one official said. "It can sit and wait. It can retreat to Baghdad. Or it can come out and engage. The Guard formations are great for with-

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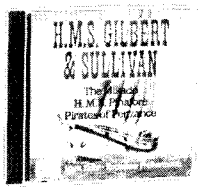

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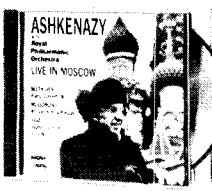

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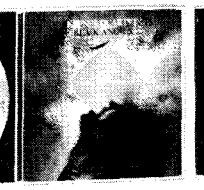

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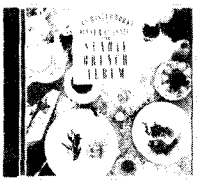

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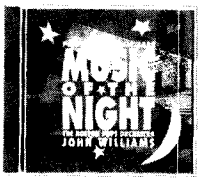

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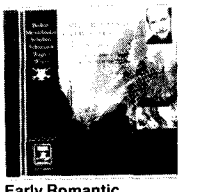

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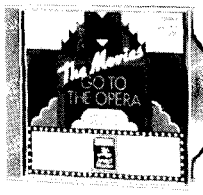

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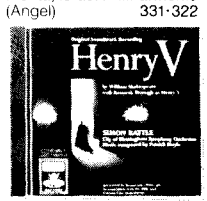

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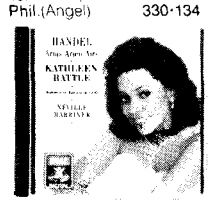

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standing aerial bombardment, but the important thing is that the units are dispersed. If they sit, we can go after them one at a time. We think they'll have to regroup to counter our attack, and then we'll hit them from the air. They can choose the way they want to die, but one way or another, they will die."

How many Americans will die too? Powell told reporters aboard his plane on the way to the Gulf that a ground campaign does not "as the night follows the day, mean huge casualties." Let's hope he's right. ●

Romania's hidden victims.

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By Dan Pavel

BUCHAREST

Romania's aborted revolution has garnered its fair share of bitterly disappointed reformers, but none, perhaps, so disappointed as the Gypsies. They form Romania's largest and most scorned minority. Like many others, they had expectations for change after the elections last May, not least of which was the hope of finally being treated as full citizens. Instead, they're being persecuted more brazenly and brutally than before.

The miners' savage attack on demonstrating students in Bucharest last June 14 and 15 was well covered in the Western media. (See "Homage to Golania" by Vladimir Tismaneanu, TNR, July 30 & August 6, 1990.) But not much was written about the miners' gratuitous assault on the Gypsies. According to a report by the Group for Social Dialogue, Romania's most influential dissident organization, immense trucks and buses overflowing with miners bearing hatchets, chains, steel bars, clubs, and other crude weapons—and accompanied by civilian guides (typically Securitate members)—suddenly appeared at the doorsteps of Gypsy homes. Men who were found inside were subjected to rapid executions; some of them had their heads cut off with a single swipe of the sickle. Women were beaten and raped in front of their horrified children and parents, who were themselves tortured in an attempt to force them to reveal hidden merchandise destined for the black market. Some men and women were tied by the hands and feet and lifted onto trucks that took them to unknown destinations. Many never returned. Of those who did, few had the courage to talk about what happened.

At a press conference after the bloody two days, Prime Minister Petre Roman denounced "the Gypsies, the leaders of prostitutes, and the world of the underground" as having been the "instruments of fascist rebellion, of Legionnaires," during World War II. This was his explanation for calling in the miners—an ironic one, since during Ion Antonescu's fascist dictatorship from 1940 to 1944, an unknown number of Romanian Gypsies died in massacres and tens of thousands were deported.

Equally remarkable was what was seen on Romanian television later in the day. In an act of unprecedented courage, Gypsy leaders denounced the attack. Not even the students had yet protested publicly. At that moment two long-standing myths were dispelled: the idealized historical and literary image of Romanians as a peaceful and hospitable people incapable of racism, anti-Semitism, chauvinism, and nationalism; and the popular view of the Gypsies as a non-people incapable of asserting their rights.

It is now assumed that the Gypsies originated in the Indus River basin and began migrating to Europe in the eleventh or twelfth century. Since at least the fourteenth century the Gypsies in Romania were forced to work as serfs on the lands of Orthodox monasteries, whose religion they adopted. They continued to live in one form of peonage or another until 1856, when they were ostensibly emancipated from serfdom. Their social ostracism, however, only increased. After the Communists took power, there was spectacular growth in the Romanian Gypsy population. But they became so marginalized in all areas of society that the issue of equal rights and opportunities was never raised (this despite the Communist constitution, which forbade discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin, religion, social status, sex, or age). Most never finished school and are illiterate. The tiny portion who became members of the nomenklatura (or, grander still, of the Executive Political Committee of the Communist Party), or who obtained high-level posts in the army, militia, Securitate, or administration, or in the professions, did so by hiding their ethnic identity.

The vast majority of Gypsies live in miserable conditions, suffering from want and even famine. Much has been made in the West of the appalling conditions of the Romanian orphanages and of Ceausescu's harsh anti-abortion law. What is generally left untold is that Gypsies constitute the majority of the children. Gypsies have tended to have larger families than the rest of the population, and because of their poverty, more were given up to the orphanages.

Denied access to legal jobs, most Gypsies were forced into the black market and the Mafia-style underground. They sought protection for their illegal activities in two ways: by bribing corrupt cops, and by giving information (about dissident intellectuals and disgruntled workers) to the Securitate. This kind of protection, of course, only increased the contempt of the population.

Most Romanians also believed the Gypsies were receiving favorable treatment from Ceausescu, who periodically freed Gypsy prisoners from jail. The frequent

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amnesties spurred rumors that Ceausescu was a Gypsy, and fooled even the Gypsies themselves, who nicknamed him "our daddy." (In the aftermath of the anti-Ceausescu revolution, as part of a cowardly push to cleanse Romanians of any blame for the sins of communism, some journals published "proofs" of Ceausescu's supposed Gypsy origin. The idea was that the Romanian nation could not have produced such a monster.) But the truth is that Gypsies weren't the only Romanians released—there just happened to be a disproportionate number of criminal prisoners who were Gypsies—and the amnesties were used to camouflage the existence of political prisoners, who were officially unrecognized in Romania. Whenever the regime found it politic to release a few political prisoners after pressure from international human rights organizations, it did so under the cover of a wider release of common criminals.

Far from singling out the Gypsies for good fortune, Ceausescu wanted to conceal their existence, especially their extraordinary demographic growth. In the past fifteen years the Gypsies have equaled and probably overtaken the Hungarians as Romania's largest minority; there are 3 million Gypsies, according to their own spokesmen, out of a total Romanian population of 23 million. Yet they had all but disappeared from the annual statistics. Ceausescu never even mentioned them as an ethnic minority. The implication was that the Gypsies had been fully integrated—a line seemingly accepted by the international human rights community, which never took much interest in their plight.

The Gypsies believed the National Salvation Front offered them the hope of a better life. Although the NSF made no specific promises to them, during the weeks preceding the first "free elections" in May 1990 the newly formed National Committee of Gypsies announced its unconditional support for NSF presidential candidate Ion Iliescu. The NSF promised a free market, which would both legalize the Gypsies' underground activities and open up new entrepreneurial opportunities for them. These promises proved empty: the economic system has hardly altered in the past year.

More devastating is the NSF's policy toward the Gypsies. As in other Eastern European countries, the political tumult in Romania ignited nationalist sentiments, some of them exceedingly unattractive. The difference in Romania is that the government is leading the crusade, and the most retrograde nationalists are acting on their feelings. The primary target of the campaign is the Gypsy population. As scapegoats they feed the resentments of many working people, including the miners, who are suffering from the economic crisis and believe the Gypsies not only are responsible for everybody else's troubles but are prospering on account of them.

The government justifies its harassment as an attempt to eradicate the black market. But the campaign against the Gypsies, as well as the one against the Hungarians for allegedly wanting to take back part of Transylvania, represents nothing more than a new populist ideology that is meant to galvanize the Romanian people. By denouncing the Gypsies as *popor de culoare* (people of color) and the Gypsies and Hungarians as Asians or non-Europeans, the government is attempting to substitute racial ideology for Marxist class ideology.

This is easily confirmed by leafing through a selection of the ultranationalist publications, chauvinistic as well as anti-Semitic, which enjoy the direct or indirect support of the National Salvation Front. These newspapers and magazines—such as *România Mare* (Great Romania), *Azi* (Today), and *Democratia* (Democracy)—are directed by people who made their reputations by promoting the propaganda of the Party and the "personality cult" of Ceausescu. They are also working hand-in-hand with the reactivated secret police.

What is happening in Romania is obviously not just a local issue. Central and Western Europe have been invaded by Romanian emigrants, with estimates ranging from 300,000 to 1 million. The intelligentsia are leaving, as are students and highly qualified workers. But the largest percentage of those fleeing are Gypsies. For the first time since the fourteenth century, the Gypsies are again becoming nomads, overwhelming the European governments with their numbers and their needs. In Germany they're living in railroad stations. Austria is sending tens of thousands back to Romania. And Czechoslovakia has begun to ask Romanians who want to immigrate or even visit for visas. The plight of the Romanian Gypsies, ignored by the world for the past century, is now everybody's problem.

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The great state lottery swindle.

LOTTO BALONEY

By Jonathan Karl

When state lotteries first came into vogue in the early 1980s, they were criticized as a regressive tax paid mainly by the poor, who would be wasting their money on a dream that wouldn't come true. There was much hand-wringing among legislators, but in a decade that saw states increasingly hungry for funds, many lotteries were started. Today thirty-three states have lotteries. They generate more than $20 billion a year in gross sales—a thousand-fold increase since 1980—and $7 billion in state revenues. To keep this fiscal crutch in

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healthy operation, $600 million is reinvested in lottery promotion—which amounts to publicly financing aggressive advertising that is often misleading and pernicious.

Consider the storyboard for a Connecticut TV lottery commercial titled "Misspent Youth":

> *Open: older man sitting in boat, afloat in a calm, mountain lake. . . . "Golden Pond" ambience—loons, birds*
>
> Man: (reflective) "When I was younger, I suppose I could have done more to plan my future. But I didn't. I guess I could have put some money aside. But I didn't. Or I could have made some smart investments. But I didn't. . . . Heck, I could have bought a one-dollar Connecticut Lotto ticket, won a jackpot worth millions, and gotten a nice big check every year for twenty years. (Smiling broadly) And I did! I won! . . . I won millions—me!' "

A voice-over spells out the sell:

> "Play LOTTO. You only have to win once. Jackpot prize paid out in twenty installments. Overall chance of winning is 1 in 30."

In fact, although the odds of winning *something* are 1 in 30, the odds of winning a million-dollar jackpot are 1 in 13 million. Lottery ads nearly always radically misrepresent the odds of winning. A survey by Duke University economists Charles Clotfelter and Philip Cook showed that only 12 percent of lottery radio and television ads reveal the true odds. And when the size of the jackpot is revealed, it is rarely mentioned that the money is usually paid out over the course of twenty years, cutting the real dollar win almost in half.

But "Misspent Youth," courtesy of Decker Rickard Agency, does more than raise false hopes; it portrays the lottery as a good alternative to retirement plans. These government-funded ads are big on promoting the lottery as a better investment than saving or education or hard work. An Illinois ad depicts a man scorning people who invest in savings bonds: investing in the lottery is the only way to become a millionaire. A ghetto billboard offered Chicago's West Side residents this advice to battling poverty: "How to go from Washington Blvd. to Easy Street—Play the Illinois State Lottery." The recession has prompted another pitch: "The ultimate shock absorber" is how Washington, D.C., describes its lottery on billboards around the city. New York once ran a commercial that showed a mother telling her daughter that she doesn't need to strive for a scholarship because Mom is playing the numbers. A billboard in Boston College's football stadium last year offered this inducement to diligent study: "Be a millionaire before you graduate—play the Massachusetts lottery."

Another popular lottery marketing technique elevates gambling to the level of civic responsibility. Touting lotteries as a boon to social programs from education to prison construction attracts new players and convinces reluctant state legislatures to adopt lotteries. A California ad reminds players: "Our schools win, too." How can you argue against a voluntary tax that pays to improve education? But in California as well as other states, lottery revenue ends up replacing general revenue allocated to education. Although California law mandates that the lottery provide supplemental funding for the public schools, education spending as a percentage of the state's general fund has steadily declined since the games started in 1985: the net financial gain to California schools from 1984 to 1991 has been less than 3 percent. In Florida general revenue allocated to education dropped by 5 percent during the first three years of the lottery.

If state lotteries had to meet the same truth-in-advertising standards as private companies do, much of the current advertising would come under attack by the Federal Trade Commission. The FTC prohibits "unfair methods of competition in or affecting commerce or deceptive advertising or practices affecting commerce," but it does not apply the law to state-run lottery monopolies. "By and large the FTC regulations regarding fairness in advertising cover private businesses only," explains John Mendenhall, an FTC official who specializes in regulations over games of chance. According to Mendenhall, every year the FTC brings dozens of lawsuits against private sweepstakes for reasons including misrepresentation of odds and prizes; it has never taken action against a state lottery.

Only Virginia, Wisconsin, and Minnesota have addressed these concerns by putting substantive limits on lottery advertising. Virginia requires that odds of winning be included in all advertising; Wisconsin and Minnesota allow only "informational" and "educational" advertising (i.e., instructions on how to play, winning numbers, and sizes of jackpots). Missouri's limitations were repealed in September 1988 when the lottery commission successfully convinced the legislature that ad limits made marketing efforts "more expensive and less effective."

The final lie, of course, is that state lotteries constitute entertainment, not gambling—though this is getting harder to maintain. New lottery games are patterned after poker, keno, sports betting, and other popular forms of casino gambling. The latest high-tech trend is video lottery—first introduced in South Dakota last year and now also played in West Virginia and Montana. It is a game indistinguishable from Las Vegas slot machines, except the odds are worse.

In a recessionary era with looming budget cuts, it doesn't seem likely that state governments will get out of the gambling business anytime soon. Governors of three lottery states (Douglas Wilder of Virginia, George Michelson of South Dakota, and Bob Martinez of Florida, who lost his bid for re-election last November) told me they oppose the lottery but that it was politically unfeasible to call for its repeal. Pro-lottery lobbyists predict that every state except Nevada and Utah will have a lottery by the end of the decade. And Representative Cardiss Collins, a Democrat from Illinois, has even proposed (three times) a national lottery, which not only would raise money but also would provide a perfect investment opportunity for "our poorer citizens."

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Options such as privatizing and then heavily taxing the lotteries, which would probably result in better odds and a greater prize for players, or opening up the lottery market to competition are unlikely even to be considered in the near future. There's no excuse, though, for not holding state lottery advertising up to the same FTC scrutiny as private gambling operations. Although it is not the duty of government to prohibit citizens from wasting their money, neither is it government's role duplicitously to encourage them to do so. ●

Among the conservative weenies.

BRAT PAC

By Alex Heard

You may have heard that people who talk to each other on computer bulletin boards are outhawking the rest of the country. That's their right, of course, but there's a large, eerie contingent who, if they had the power, would have *already* "keyed in" orders to nuke Iraq. The newest line of thought among the computer warriors is that the neutron bomb, if it were ready, would be preferable. (We'd kill the people, but preserve the ziggurat of Anu.) "No," a traditionalist recently countered on one of the boards I monitor, "I prefer the real thing. If you're going to get rid of all the people but leave buildings for no one to live in, what's the point? Why not instead leave our calling card for future generations? . . . Who wouldn't like to see Saddam Hussein at 'Ground Zero'?"

Last week the annual Conservative Political Action Conference was held at Washington's Omni-Shoreham Hotel, and I'm pleased to report that most of the flesh-and-blood people there are against turning Iraq into the world's largest glass coffee table. The subject came up pretty quickly. At the press conference that always opens CPAC, David A. Keene, chairman of the American Conservative Union, fielded questions in the same friendly, calm style I'd observed at two previous CPAC visits. Keene remained unflappable as reporters jabbed him with needlers such as, "Are conservatives irrelevant now?" and, "Has the war forced conservatives to shut up?" "I would say," he replied to the second question, "that it's *drowned out* but not *muzzled* debate on our differences with the administration." On the down side, such talk isn't exactly the stuff of a six-foot-wide convention banner: "Ignored . . . IGNORED BUT STILL HERE, Mr. President!" Keene's talk left me worrying that CPAC '91 would lack drama.

Then Keene introduced Jeffrey Wright, chairman of CPAC's co-sponsor, Young Americans for Freedom. Traditionally, the YAF spokesman at these events plays the "bad cop" role, and Wright, who'd had a half-hour to rev up, arrived at the lectern vibrating with agitation. Two items in his statement caught the eye. Protest "maggots" who would burn the flag should consider themselves warned: "It may become unsafe for [you] in this country." And the United States should use "all means necessary to win quickly." Did he mean nukes? Wright was asked. "Yes. What are we messing around for?" As commentator Cal Thomas has argued, Wright said, we should nuke the Republican Guards, and "the show" will end tomorrow. This was officially non-endorsed minutes later by Keene (who said the majority of CPACers were against this strategy), and more forcefully after that by Representative Newt Gingrich. Still, it made for impressively scary theater.

The scene also served as a reminder, Keene's orderly visions aside, that the "movement" comprises many excitable iconoclasts. After the press conference, reporters gathered around to argue with Wright, and various CPAC visionaries gathered around them to toss in their views. Two men with a group called American-Vietnamese for Freedom flitted around the edges insisting that the great unlearned lesson of Vietnam is that we should have nuked the hell out of it, too. Two older men argued nearby, one taking (confused) exception to some anti-Gorbachev sentiments Keene had expressed. "The Russians was our friends. They beat the Nazis wit' us. This kid would drop a nuclear bum on people? I don't believe—"

"Didn't Russia invade Japan before the war started?"

"No, no, no . . ."

This gentleman turned out to be retiree Frank Abrami of St. James, New York, who came to spread the word that "abolition of congressional borrowing is the *only* answer." I followed him to the exhibits area. There he kept introducing himself—and kept getting the "pat 'em, smile at 'em, push 'em aside" treatment that members of Congress use on unwanted fans. I've never understood how some people are instantly recognized as cranks in an idea bazaar as free-wheeling as CPAC. (My favorite concept to emerge from this CPAC was a proposed constitutional amendment that would state: "TAXES CANNOT BE SUCH THAT A MAN CAN'T SUPPORT HIS FAMILY.") But I did notice some young conservatives—trim, dapper, bladelike figures—casting knowing smirks at two types of their righty colleagues: old duffers like Abrami, and those clunky-shoed, pasty-faced men who formed the shock troops of the Reagan Revolution.

I fear tomorrow's right-winger may be slicker, more aggressive, and more detached from the consequences of geopolitical ballbusting. There's definitely a sense that one can have it all: you can be supertough, and you can be safely here. I spoke with a member of SMASH (Students Mobilized Against Saddam Hussein), a new "student patriot group" based primarily on Northeast campuses. Before the war began, SMASHers wrote to col-

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umnist Robert Novak seeking moral support for their anti-anti-war efforts. Novak replied (I'm paraphrasing what the SMASH person told me), "No no no no. If you want to support the war so much, go enlist." SMASH insists this isn't necessary yet. "We would serve if called, but there's no need for us now," the student said. I would never suggest SMASHers forfeit their right to support the war just because the most dangerous foes they'll face are brittle flyweights from the Marxist Student Alliance. To their credit, they're not howling to drop the big one. This is what makes Jeffrey Wright, the hyperactive YAFer, such a scary, new metareality: the nuke wimp. This superhawk never served in the military. When asked about his background, he said, "I have proudly been in the real estate business in the Los Angeles area since 1982." Over the top, Jeff baby.

Conference speakers touched on the iffy position movement conservatives are put in by Bush's forceful handling of the Gulf war. Before that came along, this year's CPAC was to be the setting for the final split with the Great Satan who caved in on taxes. Conservatives still don't care for Bush, of course, but no one can deny he learned the other (alleged) great lesson of Vietnam: don't tiptoe into combat. The idea of taking a two-Bush approach—we hate the domestic Bush, we like the forceful Bush—is tricky, so the dominant tone was mumbling. There was, however, spirited debate. Gingrich flatly told CPAC to forget Bush—"George Bush isn't the enemy, Democrats in Congress are the enemy"—and said the only thing worth worrying about was "finding candidates to run in every contestable district in 1992." For the record, Abrami fans: our man stood up during almost every Q&A and made himself heard. "Thomas Jefferson said Congress should not have license to borrow money," he informed Gingrich. "Sir, I ask you now: Are you a Jeffersonian?"

The weekend's climax came early with Jesse Helms's speech Friday afternoon. The line he advanced, which I think will prove popular, is multifaceted. Part one is: it's OK now to tell bad Arab jokes. "Do you know why it's impossible to get a cab in Washington?" the senator asked. "Because Saddam called all the drivers back to the reserves." Part two is that the invasion of Kuwait was entirely the fault of April Glaspie, who acted as a rogue elephant when she told Saddam in July that "we have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Iraq." Following this gaffe, President Bush took zircon-eyed crisis control. The only possible quibble will come after the shooting stops, Helms said, and the president moves to implement his "New World Order" in the region. "There cannot be any 'New World Order' so long as it is based on atheistic materialism," he declared, to vigorous applause. I take that to mean that the New Kuwait will have to be not just democratic, but fundamentalist Christian. Note to SMASH: you may be needed in uniform after all.

ALEX HEARD is a Washington writer.

King Hussein's oratorical retreat.

SPEECH DEFECT

By Michael Kelly

AMMAN

A few days after King Hussein unlumbered himself of the anti-U.S., pro-Iraq peroration his grateful subjects call The Speech, a flock of foreign reporters sent a petition to the palace, asking for a royal press conference to discern exactly what the king meant by the thing. Hussein promptly said yes, and at the appointed time, several hundred journalists jumped into a fleet of taxicabs and sped off to the palace. "Oh, but I am sorry, sirs," said the functionary at the castle gates. "His Majesty has developed pressing business. The news conference is postponed." The king, the grumbling hacks concluded, had come to his senses and realized that clarifying his position would be the act of a fool, which he is not.

The ruler of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is gambling his postwar status on a bet that Saddam will lose the war and with it his standing in the Arab world; that the postwar Middle East will be a place of bitter anger, chaos, and rebellion against the United States and the Arab leaders who sided with it; and that a pan-Arab leader named King Hussein ibn Talal will emerge from the flux. The first part of the bet is almost a sure thing, the second is better than odds-on, but hitting the third would constitute a trifecta, and not many players make that score.

This interpretation of The Speech is not, of course, the official one. The king himself insisted afterward that Jordan's position has not budged from the center course of neutrality and desire for peace. He was shocked, shocked, he told David Brinkley and America, that George Bush, Congress, and the Western press had so misread him. "I do not see why my statement, my appeal for peace, has been so misunderstood and misinterpreted," he said.

But the king's own minister of information made his master's thinking clear the morning after the speech, beginning with the royal personage's large view of himself. "In order to understand the speech of His Majesty the king, one must talk about the person himself," said Minister Ibrahim Izzeddin. "He believes he has a historic responsibility. His family has, through ancient and modern history, played a very, very important role in shaping public opinion—going beyond the boundaries of states in which they have rules."

He clarified the king's thinking about the postwar Arab world: "When the war ends, things will change dramatically. . . . The Arab League as an institution is totally shattered now, and the United Nations as a peacemaker is totally paralyzed." And, finally, he suggested

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the role Hussein hopes to play in the new Arab order: "We would like to build a new Arab consensus, a new Arab cooperation, that could face a world that is being shaped without any real Arab input."

This is too big a wager to hedge properly, but that hasn't stopped Hussein, one of the world's great hedgers, from trying. Thirty-eight years as an Arab leader, four assassination attempts, and a quasi-war with the PLO leaves a man either dead or possessed of a keen sense of when to do what must be done. Therefore a speech was born unlike anything the mild-mannered monarch had delivered before. On the first—and widely missed—level, it was a concession speech: Hussein of Jordan conceded Hussein of Iraq's war. Not in such blunt terms, but the message was there, and formed the basis for all that followed. The king described Iraq in language that admitted the only possible military outcome to the war was Iraq's defeat. He spoke of Iraq as having already been destroyed in a "Third World War" (a fine, if unintended, pun) that "aims to destroy all the achievements of Iraq and return it to primitive life." The only hope he offered to avoid this was not that Iraq might somehow prevail, but that the American-sponsored coalition could somehow be induced to stop fighting.

"Let us join our efforts to stop this catastrophe and save the people of Iraq from the fate that is being planned for them," he said. "The starting point in all this is immediate and serious work to make the alliance accept a cease-fire. . . . The alternative to a cease-fire is the destruction of all Arabs and Muslims, their humiliation, the trampling on their honor, pride, and legitimate hopes. . . ." Cease-fire is a chimera, and the king must have known that; neither Iraq nor the United States had expressed the slightest interest in backing down.

As implicit as the dismissal of Iraq's chances on the battlefield was the dismissal of its leader. In the speech the king offered an emotional salute to "Iraq, its heroic army, its steadfast people, its glorious women, its brave children, and its aged." Conspicuously missing in the litany was Saddam, whose name never appeared in the twenty-minute speech. In speaking of a country in which the cult of personality is so pervasive that almost every street boasts at least one giant piece of Saddam-analia, this is not the kind of thing one does by accident.

But if Iraq goes under, and Saddam with it, why should rebellious Arab masses turn to someone whose modus operandi has always been to play at least two sides against the middle? Well, Hussein used the speech for a bit of image adjustment. Having postulated the need for a new Saladin/Nasser/Saddam, Hussein spent the rest of The Speech fitting himself out as such, carefully hitting every Arab hot button in the process: "If this situation continues, it will only benefit those who covet our lands and our resources, with Israel at their forefront," he said. "There are already signs that the spoils are being divided. We hear and read every day of plans to control our resources, limit our aspirations, and usurp our rights. . . ."

He trotted forth every line of every dark conspiracy theory and every hysterical claim. He described the allied bombing of Iraq in precisely the same terms as those employed by Iraq: "Fire rains down upon Iraq from airplanes, from battleships, from submarines and rockets, destroying mosques, churches, schools, museums, powdered milk factories, residential areas, Bedouin tents, . . . [in] a war that aims to destroy all the achievements of Iraq and return it to primitive life." He spoke of plots to keep standing foreign armies on Arab soil and of "a war against all Arabs and Muslims, not just Iraq."

With this talk, he gladdened the hearts of people who need no convincing that what he said was exactly so. Half of Jordan's people are Palestinians, many of them impoverished, who define themselves in terms of permanent victimhood. What is new is the radicalization of the usually complacent upper and middle classes. It was this that made the king's unexpected move toward extremism a political imperative. As his minister of information explained, "In the Arab world it will be very difficult for anyone who has been party to this [U.S.] war camp to have any say in the future."

A few days after the speech I went to a Palestinian refugee camp in Amman, where, at a fund-raiser cum auction, 3,000 momentarily happy residents forked over more than $30,000 of very hard-earned money to buy a few hours of revenge in the form of viewing a hunk of a downed American warplane. There were no surprises in the anti-America, anti-Israel rhetoric of the poor and hungry crowd. The surprise was in the words of my young interpreter. Mona is a daughter of privilege, born to an upper-middle-class family, educated in a convent school, comfortable in cashmere jackets and American cowboy boots, and in London, Paris, New York. She is apolitical to the degree that she had skipped watching the king's speech in favor of dressing for a date. This was her first visit to a Palestinian refugee camp.

The day after the speech she and several of her friends went down to a Popular Army registration center and signed up for training. "This is the fight of our lives," she says. "The talk is over. This is the great battle between our people and the Israelis. We must fight. There is no other way." Such talk is in vogue here, in a country that is determinedly staying out of real harm's way in the Gulf war, but whose heart belongs to Saddam.

What Hussein is figuring is that the sort of shift in passion represented in Mona is not limited to his own intensely political country, but is the coming way of the postwar Arab world, and that such a world will need a man who can talk the way he did for the first time in his life on the evening of February 6. It's at least a fair shot that he is wrong. There have been no signs yet that the people of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria wish to depose their leaders, and there is every reason to think the governments in those countries can squelch all but the most dramatic upheavals. But it's at least a fair shot that he is right, and it is that possibility that has led a natural-born player of the house minimum to take the flier of his life.

MICHAEL KELLY is TNR's special correspondent in the Gulf region.

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The coming Soviet Napoleon.

IRON GNOME

By Kurt M. Campbell

The Soviets have always had a thing for hard metals. Many of the early Bolsheviks assumed Party names with glinting surfaces: "Stalin" translates literally as "man of steel," and "Molotov" means "the iron hammer." In times of turmoil Russians have often turned to men who can use the iron fist to restore that most sacred Slavic societal condition: domestic order.

As if on cue, one of the most flinty-edged members of the military backlash faction has just left his high-profile position in the Red Army to work in the shadows of internal security. He is a soldier who represents everything the USSR used to pride itself on projecting abroad and promoting at home. His name is Colonel General Boris Vsevolodovich Gromov, and Russians refer to him as "the man on horseback"—an obvious reference to Napoleon, a strategist whom Gromov respects and even physically resembles.

General Gromov, a warrior from the tortured topography of Afghanistan, is now the No. 2 man at the suddenly influential Ministry of the Interior, or MVD. Late last year President Mikhail Gorbachev, in one of the first moves that signaled his retreat from perestroika, fired his liberal MVD minister and replaced him with Boris Pugo, a tough Russified Communist from Latvia. The appointment of Gromov as Pugo's principal deputy accelerated the trend.

Gromov was placed in charge of the troops of the MVD, with a mandate to enlarge and redirect the force for domestic actions. He has conspicuously shied from publicity since his move to the ministry, but in a short interview in a November issue of the military paper *Red Star*, he spoke ominously of "new missions for the military and our career officers, including in the preservation of public order." The internal troops he commands now number nearly 300,000, an increase during the past six months of more than 50,000 men and five new divisions. Gromov has personally been recruiting crack Soviet troops returning from duty in Eastern Europe into the ranks of the MVD. He has also brought in some of his subordinate officers from Afghanistan, such as the hard-line, and quotable, General Eduard Kolochov. (It was Kolochov who scolded Western reporters for their reporting of the Baltic crisis, declaring: "Let's be clear about this. We have not staged a coup. No submachine guns, no rockets, no tank fire.")

Already there are signs of an unusual level of cooperation between Gromov's MVD troops and the other branches of the internal security forces—the KGB troops and Spetznaz units (numbering 150,000), the Border troops (about 220,000), and the notorious, black-beret-wearing City Riot Police (known as OMON and numbering about 25,000). All of these in the past had jealously guarded their turf and resisted efforts at consolidation. But now, in the Baltics, for example, elements of each of these forces have staged a series of sophisticated combined exercises under MVD command, with a view toward not only intimidating the breakaway local authorities but also training for the kinds of activities a serious crackdown would require. Gromov is also sharing the responsibility for putting MVD and regular army troops into the streets of major Soviet cities to conduct increasingly militarized patrols directed, so far, against organized crime. Although morale is terrible in the regular army as a whole, the units deployed alongside Gromov's internal forces have taken to their new missions with some zeal.

Gromov spent nearly six years with Soviet forces in Afghanistan, and his rise was fast. Military journalists in the field, such as General Major Filatov, the lively, reactionary editor of the monthly *Military-Historical Journal*, created a near-religious following for the young general with inspirational stories of his authority and devoted troops. A popular children's book about modern heroes of the Soviet state, replete with pictures and large Cyrillic type, features a chapter tracing Gromov's early years as a boy born in 1943 to a working-class family in the city of Saratov along the Volga River. His father was killed only a few months after his birth, fighting the Nazi invaders on the Dnieper river. After military school he rose quickly through the ranks, and at 39 he became the youngest Soviet general since the Great Patriotic War.

The public has blamed the defeat in Afghanistan on an older generation of generals and Brezhnev-era politicians. Gromov, by contrast, is remembered for his valor in a lost cause and for engineering that most difficult of political and military maneuvers: retreat. His work in extricating 100,000 Soviet soldiers from Afghanistan won him the highest Soviet military medal, Hero of the Soviet Union. He is best known, though, as the officer who literally led the Soviet troops home from Afghanistan. On February 15, 1989, television audiences all over the world watched as General Gromov jumped athletically from the top of a tank, straightened his camouflage fatigues, and strode calmly across the last section of bridge that separates Afghanistan from Soviet territory. At the end of the bridge he was greeted with an emotional embrace and a fistful of blood-red carnations by his 14-year-old son, Maksim, along with a throng of international journalists.

It was an impressive scene that captured the attention and imagination of the world—and of course the whole thing was staged. Gromov was not the last man out of Afghanistan, as depicted in the press. He had for

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several days been working at an army base in the southern part of the Soviet Union and went back into Afghanistan so that he could leave with the cameras rolling. Gromov did not speak with the Western reporters on the scene, but his public affairs officers helpfully supplied them with the story of how he had raised his two sons alone after the death of his wife in the crash of a Soviet military plane in the Carpathian Mountains in 1985. When he remarried, it was to a young widow with two small daughters whose husband had died in the same crash.

Besides the retreat, Gromov is revered within the military for two other feats. First, in 1988, he devised a brilliant campaign to relieve the siege of a Soviet base of operations in the Afghan city of Khost. In Khost (as in the Baltics) Gromov used special forces to gain tactical surprise, and put a premium on joint-service operations. Second, he was personally responsible for overseeing the training of senior commanders of the Afghan army to take over the burden of the war. Western intelligence agencies assumed that the Afghan puppet government would collapse after the Soviets left, but the regime and its army, using the techniques of counterinsurgency Gromov devised, remain entrenched in Kabul.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Gromov is a member of a new breed of officers who cut their teeth in a war people remember, not the long-ago war with the Nazis that has been frozen into a dull memory of pain and nostalgia. He is young, dynamic, attractive, confident, with a common touch and short stature—the last true Soviet man or a Russified Napoleonic ideal, depending on your perspective. Unlike such officers as Viktor Alksnis, the noisy colonel who leads the hard-line Soyuz (Union) faction in the Supreme Soviet, Gromov steers clear of the mud of day-to-day politics. His relative silence only increases his mystique. He is today the only real darling of the Soviet military. And when Soviet intellectuals speak of their fears of a slide toward "Bonapartism" or even of a military coup, the face they most often conjure up is Gromov's.

I had the opportunity to meet General Gromov in Kiev shortly before he took up his present post. I was part of a visiting American military delegation, and Gromov and his wife were our hosts at a Ukrainian feast of *piroshki* dumplings, tender lamb cutlets, Moldavian wine, and red caviar. Gromov is only five foot four; his olive green trousers bunch up around the ankles. But what you notice first are his eyes—in the words of one of his staff, "the ice-blue eyes of a cold-blooded killer."

Gromov is very different from other senior Soviet military men I have met. He speaks quietly, does not browbeat or humiliate his subordinates, and is not overly solicitous of senior officers. He maintains a calm, commanding presence at all times, and cautiously circles Westerners in conversation. Unlike so many high-ranking Soviet military officers, he is given neither to boastful threats nor to exaggerated dinner-time toasts to peace and friendship. He mouthed all the politically correct language of the day about perestroika and peace (he has since become much more critical), but his tone suggested that he would relish the task of smashing the imperialists on the dark and cold winter plains of Europe—like great Russian generals before him.

On the record, he was circumspect. "We are passing through a unique and difficult period in our nation's history," he explained while filling up an ashtray with Marlboro cigarette stubs. "The military has an important role as a leading institution in our society, and despite the many changes, this objective situation will remain." During dinner he championed the neglected rights of Afghan vets, expressed grave reservations about unilateral force cuts, and spoke out forcefully in favor of law and order. He voiced concern about the lack of respect accorded the Red Army. Perhaps surprisingly Gromov did speak out in favor of land reform

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for peasants and collective farms, a position normally supported by progressive Soviet economists. Finally, sipping strong, sweet coffee, he offered that "a nation that refuses to respect its own army may soon be forced to respect a foreign one"—another reminder of Napoleon.

Russia has always had men with iron hands, and I left our dinner thinking that Gromov was smelted from the same foundry. They said about Peter the Great that he could crush a silver ruble in his hand. Ivan the Terrible was reputedly a match in single combat for any of his field commanders. A sickly but strong-willed Trotsky led Red troops in crushing the Whites after the Revolution. General Gromov comes out of this tradition. He made his reputation in a foreign war, but he may ultimately be remembered for operations of a more domestic nature.

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A free ride for the Japanese in the Gulf.

BURDEN SHIRKING

By John B. Judis

When George Bush finally gets around to constructing a new world order out of the ashes of the Gulf war, one of his thorniest problems will be American relations with Japan. Since Iraq invaded Kuwait last August, Japan has not only disappointed the hopes of a generation of policymakers and public officials, but created a groundswell of ill will among Congress and the public.

The conventional wisdom about U.S.-Japan relations was something like this: if the United States doesn't take too hard a line on economic issues, then when the United States faces an international crisis, Japan will readily subordinate its economic interests to the concerns of a U.S.-led geopolitical order. But in the six months since the Iraqi invasion, Japan has repeatedly resisted and then acceded only reluctantly to American requests for aid. At the same time, it has become increasingly contentious in its economic disputes—even threatening to stop buying U.S. Treasury bonds. Japan is showing that it can say no.

Even longtime friends of Japan such as former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance have become exercised over Japan's attitude toward the Iraqi invasion. Since the day Bush declared that Saddam Hussein's invasion "would not stand," the United States has had to apply continual pressure on the Japanese for whatever assistance it has gotten. On August 29, as 200,000 U.S. troops headed toward the desert sands, Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu announced what he called his "maximum" Persian Gulf package, which did not include any financial contribution to the multinational forces. Only after a personal protest from Bush did he pledge $1 billion, raising it later, after more American pressure, to $2 billion, with another $2 billion going to the front-line states, Jordan, Turkey, and Egypt.

As of December, grumbling Treasury officials had received only about a third of their $2 billion, and by the end of January not quite half of it. The composition of the money to the United States and to the front-line states also has raised some hackles. Of the $2 billion shipped to front-line states, $600 million has been in the form of emergency commodity loans, payable with low interest over thirty years; the remainder has been in what a senior foreign ministry official calls "high priority project aid," most of which also consists of loans. These are used to fund projects like dams, bridges, public buildings, and factories. One project, the Japanese officials say, will be a cement factory in Egypt. These contributions may seem philanthropic, but if past practice is any guide, the specifications for the projects will be drawn up by Japanese consulting firms; and Japanese construction companies will get the contracts. The money will whisk through foreign hands on its way back to Japanese banks. One Commerce Department official called Japan's contribution "one of the biggest industrial subsidy schemes ever hatched."

Even Japan's contribution to the U.S. forces has sparked controversy. In lieu of cash, Japan bought 800 Mitsubishi and Toyota jeeps and sent them to the multinational forces. A senior Japanese official says they sent the jeeps because they were available "quickly," but Japanese auto companies and their suppliers gained access to a highly lucrative market that Chrysler had dominated because of its superior product. This time the money didn't even touch foreign hands. Paul Craig Roberts, an economist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, who in the past has been highly supportive of the Japanese, accused them of taking the United States "for a ride."

Few American officials were concerned when a bill by Kaifu to send army non-combatants to the Gulf failed to win support in the Diet or among the Japanese public. The United States wrote the 1947 Japanese Constitution barring the use of troops except for national self-defense, and most Americans would prefer that the Japanese continue to adhere to it. But eyebrows were raised when Kaifu's call for a team of a hundred medical workers to go to the Gulf brought forth only two dozen volunteers. By year's end they had all returned.

After the war began, Japan's foreign minister suggested that Japan might come up with another $4 bil-

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lion, but after pressure from Bush and Secretary of State James Baker, Kaifu announced that Japan would pledge $9 billion and also would send planes to Jordan to help remove Asian refugees. This is a significant sum, but both houses of the Diet must pass Kaifu's proposal, and the upper house is controlled by the Socialist and Komeito (clean-government) parties, which at the very least want to put a non-military rider on the aid that would limit it to logistics. The debate was expected to be over in days, but the first week was characterized as the most raucous since World War II, with an embattled Kaifu being shouted down repeatedly by opposition members.

Germany, the other great global economic power, has been equally lax in its contributions, but the Germans have the excuse of Eastern Europe. They also have maintained relatively amicable trade relations with the United States. In contrast, as the conflict over its contribution to the Gulf has escalated, Japan has become more truculent about trade and investment issues. Having stood on the sidelines throughout the debate over the GATT free trade treaty, the Japanese—unwilling to open their rice markets—torpedoed a last-minute compromise over agricultural imports that might have saved the talks. Then during negotiations last month with U.S. Treasury officials over removing Japan's restrictions on foreign banks and securities firms, Japan's vice minister of finance, Makoto Utsumi, threatened to curb credit to the United States if the U.S. Congress passed a bill imposing reciprocal restrictions on Japanese financial firms.

In the past Japan has occasionally and indirectly used American dependence on its purchase of Treasury notes to register protest—in the spring of 1987, for instance, Japanese bond purchasers staged a brief strike after the Reagan administration slapped a tariff on Japanese semiconductor imports. But Utsumi's statement marked the first time Japan had openly threatened to use its ownership of American debt, including obligations incurred in the Gulf, to affect American policy. Even more clearly than Japan's grudging contribution to the Gulf, Utsumi's statement shows that the Japanese no longer consider themselves junior partners in an American-led world order. "This is the most significant thing that has happened in U.S.-Japan relations in a long time," says Robert Angel, a Japan specialist at the University of South Carolina.

But if the Japanese appear ready to say no to America's world order, they are not ready to construct one of their own. Their foreign policy, Vice Foreign Minister Takakazu Kuriyama lamented last December, remains "that of a minor power." In certain respects, Japan's attitude toward the United States is similar to America's attitude toward Great Britain and France in the 1920s. Like the United States then, Japan has achieved the economic prerequisites of world leadership, but it is not yet prepared to lead. And like the post-World War I United States, Japan is content to act like a nation of loan sharks. But the United States was more circumspect about using its allies' war debt as an instrument for national economic leverage.

The Japanese emphasize their postwar pacifism in explaining their reluctance to contribute to the U.S. war effort, but equally important is the way Japan actively envisages its role in the world. Japan deals with the world, in the words of American University political scientist Masuru Tamamoto, "as if it were only a marketplace." Whereas other nations look to regional security and a new world order as well as to oil and profits, Japan appears to gauge its actions solely on a national economic calculus.

The reason most Japanese have shown so little enthusiasm over the Gulf war is that they don't see it as being in their economic self-interest. Speaking last December at New York University's Stern School of Business, the Japanese consul general, Masamichi Hanabusa, candidly explained that from the Japanese point of view it doesn't matter who controls Kuwait. "Who will control oil is a serious issue for the U.S. this time," Hanabusa said. "But it is not a very serious issue for Japan. It is of course better that oil is in friendly hands. But experiences tell us that whoever controls oil will be disposed to sell it."

The Japanese get a far higher percentage of their oil from the Middle East than the United States does—70 percent to 12 percent—but their overall import bill is much lower. As Hanabusa explained, the Japanese see oil as a "fungible commodity, so from where you import oil is a secondary concern. The question is, who consumes oil most? Those who consume most worry most about the supply of oil."

Since the shooting began in January, Japanese business leaders have been pressing for greater participation in the war effort, but for the most part their motives have little to do with Saddam Hussein. As American legislators introduce one bill after another to penalize Japan, these business leaders see the train of economic nationalism rumbling across the American plains, and they know that if they do not head it off, real damage will be done to U.S.-Japan economic relations.

Undoubtedly the Bush administration is hesitant about sharing leadership with the Japanese. Bush proclaims a new world order but dreams openly of a "next American century." In that sense the United States must take some of the blame for Japan's and Germany's intransigence. If it wants their willing assistance, the United States will have not merely to consult, but to reach agreement with them before undertaking major military moves. But whoever is to blame, one thing is certain: in the absence of willing cooperation and joint leadership from Japan and Germany, the United States is incurring responsibilities in the new world order that it is in no position to pay for. ●

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The 'defense Democrat' on the defense.

THE MYSTIQUE OF SAM NUNN

By Sidney Blumenthal

For two days of suspended time in January, as Congress debated the ultimate question of war, Senator Sam Nunn of Georgia became the center of national gravity. Without his ever seeking the presidential nomination, the leadership of the Democratic Party had suddenly fallen to him. Before this moment, his immense reputation had been protected by his distance from the national party and its quadrennial defeats. A host of admirers in the capital, from his Southern colleagues to *The Washington Post*'s editorial board to the Democratic Leadership Council, had long clamored for the party to make this archetypal "defense Democrat"—the chairman of the Armed Services Committee—its standard-bearer. Yet most of the Democrats in Congress had steadfastly refused to follow him down the line on the defense issues most important to him. Moreover, he had compiled a record on social issues that was highly conservative, far less liberal than his state would have been willing to tolerate. This had further lengthened the odds against his emergence as a national Democratic figure.

But now, with Nunn as the author of the resolution calling for the extension of sanctions and against the resolution that would approve war, the Democratic leadership, in closed strategy meetings, treated him with an abject deference they had never shown him before. But then, he was giving them political cover he had never given before. He was willing to extend himself at last—as camouflage netting.

His mystique has made him seem invincible. But the Nunn cult of personality is curious because Nunn himself has tried not to be a personality. In small groups he can exhibit a wry sense of humor, and on the stump in rural Georgia he has revealed a folksy side, including barnyard jokes about cow manure never aired in the drawing rooms of Washington. But mainly he appears dry and shy, withdrawn behind the armor of inexpressiveness, an Olympian pose that is quite conscious.

"I can't think of any major problem that can be solved with partisanship," Nunn has said. He prefers the role of disinterested expert. He waits for a situation to develop, for the lines of debate to form, before he enters. When he believes he holds the balance, the others are forced to demand: What does Sam Nunn think? His owlish, opaque gaze projects calm rumination, inner security, unruffled authority. He has his own sense of how the process ought to operate; when it doesn't meet his specifications, he thinks it's improper. He has mastered every corner of his arcane subject and chastises those who impute to him any political motive. He has the mental habits of a grindingly methodical lawyer, which he is. Inevitably his argument is organized around the technical, the tactical, the procedural. Usually his solution is a carefully hedged middle ground, covered with the patina of analysis. Nunn's ideal of politics is cool and passionless: politics as policy. But he has been building more than a case; he has built power.

Nunn's history and temperament would seem to have placed him anywhere but across a line in the sand drawn by the president. "He did not," says one of his friends in the Senate, "set out to do it." But Nunn's position on the war—the most important position in his career—was not quite the dramatic reversal it appeared. The traditions of Georgia and the Senate, which Nunn wears like a mantle to lend him his aura of mastery, were not enough to ward off defeat in the Senate vote. But those traditions and what he has made of them may suggest what pointed him to the Senate floor to take command of a lost cause—and what it might mean for the Democrats that he has done so.

Sam Nunn Sr., known as "Mr. Sam," was a well-to-do landowner and lawyer in the central Georgia town of Perry. He was Southern gentry rather than Southern populist, and a player of consequence in local politics. He was sent to the state legislature, became mayor of Perry, and ran the campaigns in Houston County of Governor Eugene Talmadge and his senator son Herman. Mr. Sam's wife, Elizabeth, a former schoolteacher, maintained in their home the largest library in town. Mr. Sam was an avid reader of books on the War between the States, reading and rereading Douglas Southall Freeman's three-volume *Lee's Lieutenants.*

Every Thanksgiving Elizabeth Nunn's Uncle Carl came down from Washington for the holiday dinner. Carl Vinson had been elected to the House of Representatives in 1914, and in 1932 seniority made him chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee. On the eve of World War II he oversaw the instant explosion of the military budget, funneling billions into the construction of bases and factories in Georgia, especially middle

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Georgia. Military Keynesianism pulled the region out of the Depression and laid the basis for a modern economy.

Since before the Civil War Southerners in control of key congressional committees had wielded influence out of proportion to their weight in the country. Vinson, who ruled over his committee with an imperious hand, had two sobriquets: "the Swamp Fox," for his shrewdness at legislative guerrilla maneuver, and "the Admiral," for his command of what he called "my Navy." After 1947, when the service committees were merged and he became the first chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, he could also refer to "my Army."

Sam Nunn Jr. saw Vinson as a model, and when he graduated from Emory Law School in 1962, he joined his uncle's committee staff for a year. "He was at the zenith of his power," Nunn told me in an interview. "That had a big effect on me."

At the end of his stint with Uncle Carl, unsure whether to set up his legal practice in Perry or Atlanta, Nunn sought the advice of Senator Herman Talmadge, the old family friend. Talmadge counseled him to return to his roots, where he had a better chance of winning a seat in the state legislature. Back in Perry, Nunn joined a group of responsible moderates devoted to racial comity during the civil rights revolution. Soon he was elected to the legislature. After four years there he lobbied the members hard to create a new congressional district in middle Georgia that might be his. But his ambition to follow in the footsteps of his great uncle was rebuffed, not least because of the opposition of the new governor, Jimmy Carter. Inside the Statehouse, a detractor hung a sign: "Bye, bye, Nunn." Then, with the 1972 election approaching, Richard Russell died. Given the lifetime tenures of Southern senators, the rarest of opportunities had presented itself.

For Georgians, filling the vacancy meant filling a myth. As the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Russell had formed with Vinson a powerful legislative alliance. Russell was a monastic man, a lonely drinker and voracious reader, married to the institution as only a Southerner could be. In 1952 he had deluded himself into believing that the deference paid him within the Senate represented a national will. His presidential candidacy served only to demonstrate his very limited regional support and to expose his vanity. His defeat showed him as decidedly mortal, and he would never rise beyond the Senate.

Still, his institutional power remained intact. He supported a large Pentagon budget, but warned against the United States becoming the "world policeman." At the start he opposed American involvement in Vietnam. Once massive forces were committed, he seemed to have become a hawk, though when the crunch came in March 1968 he strongly opposed the Pentagon's urgent request for a call-up of the reserves. For him, the constitutional tension between Congress and the executive over foreign policy was a central dilemma. But he was willing to give in to the president in the period of the cold war because of its extreme danger. Lyndon Johnson, like Harry Truman, respected Russell more than any other member of the Senate; both relied on him in every crisis. "His struggle," writes the historian Caroline F. Ziemke, "often led to apparent inconsistencies between what he believed was right and the public position he actually took, inconsistencies which, in turn, compromised his ability to exploit his influence and leave an indelible mark on U.S. policy in Southeast Asia."

"I met him two or three times," says Nunn of Russell. "I came over to the Senate side with Uncle Carl when they had a conference. I was a junior lawyer. It was shaking hands, that's about it." Russell was remote, but his image loomed. Nunn asked Uncle Carl whether he should seek Russell's seat. "He told me not to run," says Nunn, "that I was crazy to run, that I didn't have a chance—mission impossible." But Nunn felt that if he did not take the risk he would be finished in politics. Vinson seemed to be testing his nephew's mettle. "After the first two weeks to see if I'd stay in, he pitched in and helped," says Nunn. The Swamp Fox notified his many supporters that he was backing Young Sam, and that financial contributions would not be inappropriate.

Nunn faced an Atlanta lawyer named David Gambrell, who had been appointed by Governor Carter to serve the remainder of Russell's term and was Carter's campaign finance chairman. "When you have an appointed senator," says Nunn, "there are at least four or five factions who didn't get the job." Eventually, all those who felt rejected mobilized on behalf of Nunn. It was, he remarks, "a strange coalition"—an anti-Carter coalition, in fact—ranging from segregationist Lester Maddox to civil rights activist Julian Bond. Nunn accused Gambrell of being a "false conservative," supporting the Democratic nominee, George McGovern, for president, and buying his seat with contributions to Carter. The candidate also made a pilgrimage to the man who was then the Confederate flag. "George Wallace," said Nunn, "represents the real views of Georgians."

But perhaps the crucial stroke in his campaign—and career—was made by Uncle Carl. Before the runoff, Vinson took Young Sam up to Washington to see Senator John Stennis of Mississippi, Russell's successor as chairman of the Armed Services Committee. Nunn left Stennis's office with a pledge that, if elected, he would be named to the committee. This rite made Nunn the presumptive heir of both Vinson and Russell. Flourishing this promise, he won a narrow victory.

The new senator took his direction partly from the courtly Stennis, who conducted the committee's business with an air of civility and the tap of a pencil on a water glass. But simply becoming a Southern grandee in the old style was no longer possible in the defense field. A new class had intruded to set the terms of the discussion: the defense intellectuals. Nunn soon began to take his lead partly from Rand, the Air Force-sponsored think tank, using their studies to enhance his reputation as one who knew what he was talking about. He appeared more intellectual, more expert than his older colleagues. But he also partly followed the lead of another

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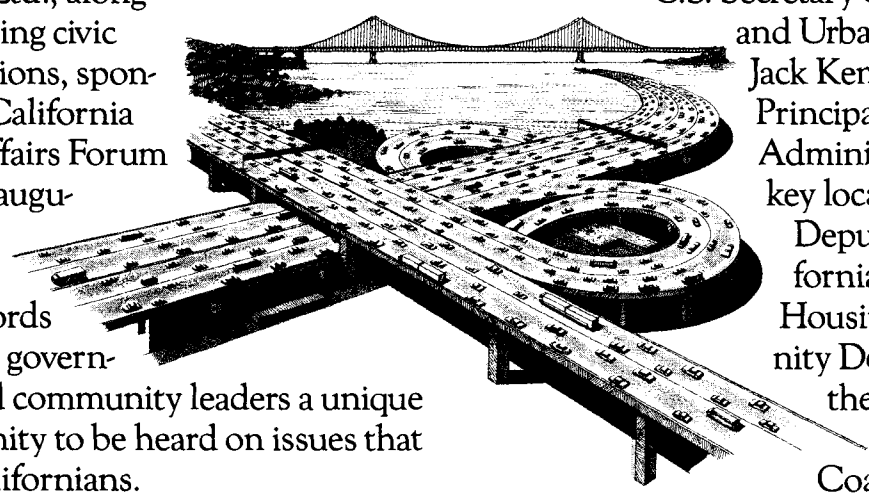

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committee member, Senator Henry Jackson, a scathing critic of détente with the Soviet Union and the chief proponent of the more-is-better school of defense spending. Jackson was a strident cold warrior whose ideas on defense were adduced from ideological points. Nunn always presented his case based on clinical evidence, careful to position himself as an expert beyond ideology and followership.

In 1976 Nunn endorsed Jackson for president, but Jackson was handily dispatched in the primaries by the former governor of Georgia, Nunn's earlier nemesis. His quiet criticisms of Carter as impulsive, weak, and lacking in judgment were accepted as special insights coming from a Georgian and enhanced Nunn's own reputation as the opposite. In 1978 the senator and the president attempted to make peace by uniting around the neutron bomb. Carter commissioned him to drum up support for the weapon in Congress, but then withdrew his own support, embarrassing Nunn, who felt this was a final betrayal.

Nunn had tried to steer a middle course in favor of both arms control and an arms buildup—a course between Carter and Jackson. But at the crucial moments he swerved toward the latter. In 1979, as the ratification hearings on SALT II were beginning, Nunn urged a 5 percent increase in the defense budget. In 1980 Jackson demanded that the committee issue a negative report on the treaty, even though it did not fall within its jurisdiction. Stennis, whose energy and grip on the committee were waning, cited the tradition of the Senate—the proper respect for other committees—which to him was paramount. But Nunn, backing Jackson, broke down Stennis's resistance. Though Nunn claims he would have voted for the treaty, he had helped undermine its passage. After the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Carter never even submitted it to the Senate for approval; now he too was advocating a buildup.

Ronald Reagan swept into the capital with long coattails and a Republican Senate. John Tower of Texas became the chairman of Armed Services. He was extremely partisan, knowledgeable, and disagreeable.

In the early 1980s Nunn positioned himself as the pivotal man in a number of compromises involving the funding of weapons systems, invariably crafting a middle ground. He spent a good deal of his time in the imbroglio over how many MX missiles—in hardened silos or on racetracks—would close the metaphoric window of vulnerability. In 1983, when Reagan sent Marines to Lebanon, as if their mere presence would straighten out its convoluted civil strife, and the Democratic leadership endorsed a War Powers resolution in support, Nunn went into the opposition. "It is an absolutely absurd military mission," he said. Russell's cautions about Vietnam were not far in the back of his mind. When a truck bomber blew up the Marines, Nunn's prophecy was fully borne out. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger's credibility with Congress was virtually nil, his frequent testimony dismissed as worthless. He was presiding over a "Department of Procurement, not a Department of Defense," Nunn cracked.

Back in Georgia he had become an institution, an untouchable political figure. During his effortless reelection campaign in 1984, he was endorsed by dozens of craven Republican leaders. Nunn's victorious return to Washington was especially sweet because Tower had resigned and the new chairman of Armed Services was the conservative icon Barry Goldwater, the weakest chairman in the committee's history. Nunn often adroitly operated as the de facto chairman without Goldwater ever aware of his figurehead status. "We better come up with somebody," said Goldwater, "or I'm going to support this guy for president."

In 1986 the Democrats regained the Senate. At last Sam Nunn was in the chairman's seat of Richard Russell. Meanwhile, conservatives within the redoubt of Weinberger's Pentagon were making a heroic, devious effort to create an enormous obstacle to prevent Reagan from ever signing an arms control agreement with the Soviets. They argued that the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty could be reinterpreted to permit that which it clearly prohibited—the full development of Star Wars, the president's "dream." Informed that he could make the treaty mean what he wanted it to mean, Reagan was happy. But by doing so, he would demean the Senate's treaty-making power to the vanishing point. In March 1987 Nunn held forth on the Senate floor for days in defense of the treaty and the Senate's constitutional prerogatives. His speeches were a thunderbolt. For all intents and purposes, they settled the debate and helped clear the way for the Intermediate Nuclear Force Treaty.

Republicans who had come to view Nunn as an ally were becoming wary, and soon their apprehension turned to rage. Upon taking office, George Bush nominated Tower to be his defense secretary. It was assumed that he would be routinely confirmed by the committee he had chaired. Nunn, who had never liked Tower, now came to see him as a debauched, untrustworthy character. "Tower didn't have many close friends around here," Nunn says laconically. "But I didn't have any major problems. I had fully intended to support him. It was an accumulation of facts. What people don't realize is that most of that stuff [stories of Tower's drinking and womanizing] came out before we got the FBI file. The press was chasing it all over the place. The other thing people don't realize—the most unpleasant, disagreeable task in my life—is that so many people would come up and tell me firsthand experiences who wouldn't testify. What do you do with that? As chairman of the committee, I didn't use the arguments on the floor. In my own mind—people giving me accounts, at least fifteen accounts—I can't ignore that. It's not a court of law, but it went into my personal thinking."

Single-handedly, Nunn brought down the Tower nomination. The Republicans were in a fury. Senator Robert Dole, their sulfurous minority leader, mocked his stance of nonpartisanship as "Nunn-partisanship." But on issue after issue of defense and foreign policy, Bush relied upon Nunn. In 1989 his voting record showed that he backed Bush 72 percent of the time, the

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fourth-highest rating among Democratic senators.

Nunn was pleased to be working closely with a president, though by 1990 he had begun to criticize him for failing to respond to the end of the cold war. Bush's military strategy, he charged, was a series of "blanks"—not the necessary "fundamental rethinking," though Nunn had only begun that task himself.

By now he was commonly spoken of as a presidential contender. In 1987 he had said he would give the possibility "serious thinking," but then veered away. In 1990, however, he seemed to be trying to make himself more acceptable to the party. He quit the Burning Tree Country Club in Bethesda, which discriminates against women. Overnight, he tossed overboard his position against abortion, making his new case in terms of practicality, not morality, revealing how perfunctory his belief in his previous position had been.

He treated the self-consciously "centrist" Democratic Leadership Council, which featured his portrait on the cover of the first issue of its publication, *The Mainstream Democrat*, as a congressional staff to provide him with what he was missing in domestic policy. "He relies a lot on us," says Al From, the DLC's director. "The first big initiative he did was on national service. Will [Marshall, a DLC official] wrote the book on that." But there was still no domestic Nunn canon as there was on defense.

Then Saddam Hussein struck. Even after the initial U.S. mobilization in the Persian Gulf, Nunn did not anticipate that he would become the leader of the opposition. But when the president doubled the troops in Saudi Arabia on November 8, Nunn was notified after the fact. "I thought the die was cast then," he says. This huge army could not be sustained on the ground, except with rotation of the troops or war—and Bush had ruled out rotation. "I never objected to having an offensive force. By October 1 I felt we had a very viable offensive force there with air. . . . But after the November decision they had given up on economic sanctions. . . . The fact that they didn't consult me didn't bother me. The fact they did it bothered me."

Nunn's instincts about the proper way things ought to be done and the respect the executive should pay the Senate impelled him to hold hearings. He saw himself as representing the general sentiment of the military establishment, which had qualms about Bush's haste. His witnesses—including two former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, David Jones and William Crowe, former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, and former national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski—were among his closest advisers. Their very presence was an appeal to authority.

There was another authoritative figure in the hearing room, though he was a ghost. "I see the Middle East in some of the same ways that Russell probably saw Vietnam," says Nunn, "a place we would get into and not be able to get out of. . . . In Vietnam there was no clear military mission. Here there was a clear military mission. Here I did not think liberating Kuwait in the next four weeks was vital. I saw it as over the next six to twelve months. It had become vital to get the Iraqis out of there because of the huge commitment of the president's prestige."

By the time Nunn delivered his floor speech, it was clear that his cause was lost. He had been unable to carry with him any of the Southern Democrats who regularly followed his lead, with the exception of David Boren of Oklahoma. Nunn's speech, a desperate effort to establish a balance between means and ends, ultimately reflected his ambivalence. He challenged the notion that Kuwait was a vital interest: "We throw around the word 'vital' very carelessly." He acknowledged that sanctions guaranteed nothing. He demanded that Saddam leave Kuwait, and admitted that "military power" might be necessary. Nunn's intellectual position, and therefore the Democrats', lacked clarity and depth. Having conceded the principle of using military force to protect an interest he doubted was vital, he found himself ensnared in Russell's quandary. He had proposed not an idea but a hope.

What the Democrats were left with was a tactical hypothesis—an instrumental point—that cannot be revived. With Saddam unbending after being subjected to the greatest air bombardment in history, it now seems absurd to believe that sanctions alone would have made him relent. Nunn himself recognizes that the position he had laid out is no longer there. "That debate is over," he says. "Nobody will ever be able to demonstrate with finality whether it would have ever worked."

When the bombs started falling, Nunn scrambled to restore his luster by proposing a resolution supporting the troops. In closed sessions with the Democratic leadership, he was described as confused about and obsessed with the sources of Bush's actions. Nunn was thinking out loud; the silent command was absent. His political friends were suddenly unsure about his prospects. "Where he's going politically, the best thing I could tell you is you better talk to him," says From of the DLC. "I don't know, and I know him pretty well."

The idea of a presidential campaign has no appeal for Nunn now. "I don't plan to be a candidate in 1992 and I'm not inclined that way," he says. "In all sincerity, I believe I'll finish my political career in the Senate." His Republican critics suggest that a political miscalculation on the war has blasted his ambition. But it was never obvious that Nunn would have (or will) ever run for president—just that he let others say he should. He has not had a real campaign since he was first elected to the Senate. He recalls that when he used a negative commercial, his mother, offended, chided him—and he pulled it off the air. The political process, he says, is not what it ought to be: "It's very bad."

But he is paying the price of having staged a candidacy in another form. He has reached a place in his career for which neither Uncle Carl nor Admiral Crowe, neither the experts at Rand nor at the DLC, prepared him. In spite of himself, he has become what he had damned: a national Democrat. Exposed in the crisis as decidedly mortal, Sam Nunn can no longer lay claim to mystic political wisdom. ●

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Three from Europe

Sadly, I report that Bertrand Tavernier's new film **Daddy Nostalgia** (Avenue) is an aggregation of mistakes. The screenplay, by his ex-wife Colo Tavernier O'Hagan, is an album of clichés, and Tavernier, though a master, has worsened matters with the casting and some unusually trite directing.

The sorriest mistake is the central idea, which is weary with overuse. An elderly person is dying; family members gather; mixed emotions, including rue, suffuse the occasion. The last times I saw this framework were in Malle's *May Fools* and Petrie's *Rocket Gibraltar*. This time the elderly person is Dirk Bogarde, an Englishman with a French wife, who has a bad heart attack at the beginning, then spends 100 minutes dying in the company of his affectionate but astringent wife and his astringent but affectionate daughter.

The place is the south of France. The picture, like Bogarde and his daughter, Jane Birkin, is bilingual. Daddy has not been as good a father as he might have been, and of course we see the flashbacks when the small daughter can't get her father to read a poem of hers in the middle of a party, etc. But now father and daughter have some outings and talks and frankness together, and when she leaves to go back to Paris, where she lives and writes screenplays (better than this one, I hope), they "understand" each other. Soon after, she gets a telegram from Maman with the inevitable news, and daughter spends the night walking the Paris streets before she goes south for the funeral.

Even in this utterly familiar sentimental gavotte, a few flashes of feeling might have been possible if, for one thing, the dialogue had some freshness. (I'm speaking of the English; the French sounds more interesting, but maybe that's because I understand it poorly.) A key line, which O'Hagan treasures so much that she repeats it: "The sweetness of life, my darling, is terribly perishable."

And even that genteel-English-novel-of-the-1920s dialogue might be endurable if the acting were better. Odette Laure, the mother, has no English lines but can't do much with the French ones. Bogarde is shockingly bad as Daddy. This is his first appearance since 1978, after a career of some distinction, and retirement hasn't helped him. Every moment is labored, seems practiced before a mirror. Besides, he looks odd—with padded shoulders and swollen waistline.

The biggest burden is Birkin. This wildly overvalued actress, impoverished in talent but not in teeth, clearly envisions herself as the most sensitive, mercurial being since the young Katharine Hepburn and carries on in a fey, self-loving way that verges on the ludicrous.

Tavernier contributes little more than his bad judgment in doing this material with these people. He speaks the voice-overs himself, sententiously, in French; he slaps in those painfully unoriginal flashbacks. Well, this is a good time to remember that O'Hagan wrote the screenplay of *A Week's Vacation*, a lovely film in which the brief scenes between a grown daughter and her father were greatly superior to any of the protracted scenes here. And to remember that Tavernier, who directed that lovely film, has made some near-masterpieces. Onward.

The Spanish director Carlos Saura was born in 1932, so he was a small child through all the civil war, yet it deeply marked his directing career. In allegory (*The Hunt*) and otherwise (*Cousin Angelica*), he has grappled with that fratricidal horror and its aftermath. Now comes another allegory on the subject, **Ay, Carmela!** (Prestige), which shows so much of Saura's talent in such lopsided circumstances that it's a frustration.

Once again—as it is so often around the world—the trouble is the screenplay, not its execution. Rafael Azcona adapted the screenplay from a play by José Sanchís Sinisterra that Saura thinks is "brilliant." Perhaps. The screen version is not. In 1938 two vaudevillians, husband and wife, together with an adolescent mute whom they have befriended, are Republican sympathizers entertaining Republican troops. By accident, they enter Franco territory and are forced to alter their pro-Red material to pro-Franco stuff.

The allegorical overlay is heavy: opportunism finally doesn't pay off, yet persistent virtue has its triumphs because, after the climax, the mute lad can speak. (He will carry on the proletarian struggle.) But Saura is so gifted that he weaves substantial visual texture out of these strands, and he fills in the windy high-mindedness of the film with dozens of telling details. Long after the story has faded (I hope), I'll remember a fascist

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The End of Innocence. *Dyan Cannon's screenplay has a much too familiar subject—a woman driven over the edge by emotional abuse who recovers through therapy. But her performance is truthful, and her directing debut shines. (Reviewed 2/11/91)* **The Godfather: Part III**. *More about that very rich family of drug peddlers, extortionists, and murderers. Not off-puttingly worse than I and II. (1/21/91)* **Hidden Agenda**. *This mystery set in Northern Ireland omits any mention of the Unionist majority. Otherwise, it's adequate work, with Brian Cox solid as an English detective investigating ostensible IRA murders. (2/4/91)* **The Silence of the Lambs**. *Its assets are Anthony Hopkins as a psychiatrist turned cannibalistic killer, Tak Fujimoto's lighting, Jonathan Demme's direction. Otherwise this thriller lacks unity and, after plentiful atmospherics, sense. (2/18/91)* —**SK**

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captain eating beans as he questions his prisoners and an Italian soldier, fighting along with Franco, protesting that his mother makes better spaghetti than the stuff being fed to the Vaudevillians.

Memorable, too, is the performance of Carmen Maura as the wife. In several Almodóvar films she suggested a Spanish Irene Papas. Here the resemblance is more dramatic—the peasant woman as national symbol (Delacroix with garlic sauce). Allowing for the script's bloats, Maura is resourceful and true. Her husband is played by Andrés Pajares, who has a high reputation in Spain as a comic actor and cabaret performer, and shows us why.

The Dutch director George Sluizer knows his craft so well that he can use it reticently in **The Vanishing** (Tara). This is a mystery whose main ingredients are not suspense and chill but puzzle, coolness, imponderables; and Sluizer neatly fits little pieces together that have nothing to do directly with his story but that underscore its mode. During certain strenuous scenes in France, we hear a radio announcer reporting a bicycle race, with double-meaning comments. A man looking for a disappeared girlfriend in a large rest area along a highway kicks a flattened beer can as he walks. Much later we learn that the can was flattened by the car in which the woman was abducted. Even when Sluizer is doing the edges, so to speak, he's doing the center.

He adapted the screenplay with Tim Krabbe from a Krabbe novel. It's built around an encounter between a Dutch couple driving through France on holiday and a French chemistry professor. The professor is perfectly set up to commit a crime: he is ultrarespectable, utterly conventional. He commits his crime with the calm, dignified precision that is part of his persona.

The Dutch woman disappears, and there is never any mystery (to us) about the abductor, only about her fate. The professor, after a three-year wait, during which he plays cat-and-mouse with the still-tormented Dutchman, lures him cleverly back to France. The picture's finish involves one of those themes that, Poe said, "are entirely too horrible for the purposes of legitimate fiction." Not any longer. In one respect this professor illustrates the same point as the Anthony Hopkins character in *The Silence of the Lambs*: extraordinary intelligence is no warranty of ordinary sanity.

The two men are first-rate, Bernard-Pierre Donnadieu as the professor, Gene Bervoets as the Dutchman. The screenplay is relentlessly cruel—or, to put it another way, it couldn't have been made in this country. Sluizer does his screenplay more justice than fate does his criminal. ●

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What, if anything, is a 'woman poet'?

A Poem of One's Own

By Mary Jo Salter

"I went to look for your new book at the store," a friend remarked some months ago, "and I couldn't find it in the poetry section. So I asked the guy behind the desk. 'Mary Jo Salter?' he said. 'Oh, she's in the women's section.' "

My first reaction on hearing this was, I admit, something not much less extreme than rage. The women's section? Why should my book of poems be placed next to *Our Bodies, Ourselves* or *New Guide to Breastfeeding* or *Women Workers in China*? All worthy books—but not poetry. Poetry is what I write, and the heroes I have kept in mind while writing it have included not only Dickinson and Moore and Bishop but Shakespeare and Auden and Frost. A stranger who for some reason had wanted to sample my poems, and who like me felt that poetry was essentially genderless, might not have checked the women's section, and would have walked out of the bookstore empty-handed.

But this image of empty-handedness made me reconsider. The women's section in bookstores has become big business, which is more than you can say for the poetry section. Most Americans, most Europeans—most book-buyers, I suppose, around the world—live in towns and cities where the poetry section at the local bookstore either doesn't exist or is too small to warrant a label. Who was I, then, to complain that my book of poems was taking up space in the women's section? Shouldn't I be glad to be misappropriated anywhere the well-meaning bookstore clerk should care to put me—the sports section, the gardening section, thrillers, knitting manuals, comics, calendars?

And besides, "ain't I a woman?" Had there been an American literature section in the bookstore, I would have been honored and delighted if a book of mine found a home there. I accept that I am an American and that everything I write partakes in some way—although usually in an indirect and unconscious way—of my Americanness. Do I bristle at being placed in the women's section because I am displeased with—or, worse, ashamed of—being a woman?

Displeased? I think every woman of the late twentieth century is at least partly displeased with the practical experience of being female, to the extent that she realizes that the women's movement, and her own personal movement toward self-determination, are far from over. The continuing oppression of women around the globe is scandalous, and needs no confirming statistics from me. Ashamed? I hardly think so. But pride in being a woman, or in being an American, or in being a person with white skin—pride in any accident of birth with which our own talents have had and can have little to do—seems to me a foolhardy, blinkered excuse for a virtue. At its worst, such pride is nothing more exalted than bigotry. Better to say that one accepts, profits by, takes the knocks from, revels in being a woman than that one is proud of it; and better still to say that one enjoys being a poet who is a woman.

And yet, and yet. (Whenever we take up the slippery question of gender, there must be another "and yet.") Though pride may be a sin, or even just a snag, the exercising of a special sympathy with your own kind is one of many enlightenments to be wished for. The more I have thought about my indignation at being put in the women's section, the more I have realized that in certain ways I had put myself in the women's *poetry* section long ago.

Why, for instance, had I adopted Emily Dickinson as a sort of combination muse, mother, and teacher? For the past five or six years I have read her every week if not every day, written both poetry and prose about her, taught courses devoted to her. Of course, one must admire the originality and the precision that she brought to her craft, and her use of that craft to articulate the great abstractions of Life, Love, Death, Immortality. But having underscored that these sexless skills are the stuff of Dickinson's greatness, I must in all honesty confess that what first attracted me to her was the example she provided as a woman poet.

"I never had a mother," Dickinson remarked in a rare meeting with her literary mentor, Thomas Wentworth Higginson. In a letter she told him, "My Mother does not care for thought." Much has been written—indeed, too much with too little evidence has been written—about Dickinson's frustration with her mother's failure not only to think but to love and to communicate. But it does seem fair to remark that Dickinson sought a thinking female "role model," as we call it today, and took solace from the spiritual motherhood of certain women writers of her time.

Although her poems are more indebted to the Bible and Shakespeare than to any other sources, and although she turned to men for literary advice and help early in her career, it's important to remember that the writers whose portraits she hung on her bedroom walls included Emily Brontë and George Eliot and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. Ellen Moers's thoroughly researched and fascinating book, *Literary Women* (1976), illustrates Dickinson's reading preferences even more forcefully: "The real hidden scandal of Emily Dickinson's life," Moers wrote,

> is not the romances upon which biographers try vainly to speculate, but her embarrassing ignorance of American literature. She knew Emerson's poetry well, and perhaps a little Thoreau and Hawthorne; but she pretended, at least, not to have read a line of Whitman, no Holmes, no Poe, no Irving; and none of the colonial New England poets. Instead she read and re-read every Anglo-American woman writer of her time: Helen Hunt Jackson and Lydia Maria Craik and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and Rebecca Harding Davis and Francesca Alexander and Mathilde Mackarness and everything that George Eliot and Mrs. Browning and all the Brontës wrote. "Mrs. Hunt's poems," Dickinson wrote in an astonishing letter of 1871, "are stronger than any written by women since Mrs. Browning, with the exception of Mrs. Lewes."

Moers's reading list is a little misleading—Dickinson was versed in a great deal of male British literature—but her main point is a fertile one. Did it harm Dickinson in any way, one wonders, to read Mathilde Mackarness, whoever she was, instead of Walt Whitman? Apparently not—at least if you believe that "genius knows itself," as Adrienne Rich wrote in a fine essay on Dickinson. "[She] chose her seclusion, knowing she was exceptional and knowing what she needed. It was . . . a seclusion which included a wide range of people, of reading and correspondence."

Dickinson's judgment on that reading may differ quite broadly from our own.

Mary Jo Salter is the author most recently of *Unfinished Painting* (Knopf), her second collection of poems.

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But if, like many people on both sides of the Atlantic, she overrated Elizabeth Barrett Browning's work, who can blame her? Elizabeth Barrett was already a successful poet before she met Robert Browning in her late 30s, and after marrying him she was so little inclined to "retire" from poetry that she went on to write *Aurora Leigh*, one of the best-selling, most ambitious, most feminist, and longest poems in the English language. One can imagine the vicarious thrill that Dickinson, who was only 30 when Barrett Browning died and just embarking on the most prolific period of her own career, must have felt on picking up *Aurora Leigh* and testing its published heft in her hands. Love of other authors is one of the essential pore-opening experiences that enables authorship. If Emily Dickinson had greater love for Elizabeth Barrett Browning, or even Mathilde Mackarness, than for Edgar Allan Poe or Herman Melville, and if that love helped her, in a world hostile both to women and to poets, to become a great poet, why on earth should we wish to fix what already worked?

And yet, and yet. To accept Dickinson's freedom to read and to love any writers who suit her is quite different, I think, from promoting those writers to Dickinson's league, simply by virtue of their sex. Two decades ago Tillie Olsen wrote that if we are to gauge contemporary writers' achievement by "appearance in twentieth-century literature courses, required reading lists, textbooks, quality anthologies, the year's best," and so on, only one woman is cited for every twelve men. This is an infuriating practice, and in recent years much has been done to retire it. But the process of allotting "equal time" to men and women has been a less sullied business in fiction than in poetry, for the novel is a genre at which women have excelled since its inception.

Men and women argue disinterestedly about whether Jane Austen was the greatest English novelist—or perhaps it was George Eliot. In the genre of poetry, women writing in English must pay our respects to Shakespeare, and to Milton, and to Chaucer, and a long list of others just a notch below them. Until recent times the writing of poetry was mostly the province of the learned, which in itself isn't a bad thing. The problem is that the learned, of course, were men. Thankful as we are to Virginia Woolf for making us see that if Shakespeare had had a sister, educational and social and psychological conditions would never have allowed her to become Shakespeare, so to speak, the fact remains that we have, as yet, no woman Shakespeare in English.

Male poets have had a double-barreled power behind them. The female muse inspired them; the male literary tradition, a tradition of accomplishment, gave them fathers both to revere and to try to usurp. Women have had a less accomplished literary tradition, though it grows more accomplished every century; and women writers may sometimes be seen deifying other women writers as a way, I suspect, of making them serve as both muse and tradition. Certainly, we don't have to accept the views of Eliot and Yeats and a host of others who align maleness with accomplishment and femaleness with inspiration. We may want to perform some violence upon the long-dead Pound when he writes, "Poetry speaks phallic direction." We may want to throttle Stevens for titling an essay "The Figure of the Youth as Virile Poet" and for composing this sentence in all complacent pride: "The centuries have a way of being male."

Irritating as it remains that male experience has for millennia been assumed to be normative, and female experience exceptional, we may, perhaps, forgive our male poets for finding inspiration in the female principle. The lunatic, the lover, and the poet are of imagination all compact, and as any poet, male or female, will tell you, a poem's first moment of inspiration is a sensation almost indistinguishable from that of falling in love. A heightened awareness of the reality of another person is the beginning of love; and that love is the beginning of a heightened awareness of the larger universe. Lovers may walk into doors or lose their wallets or forget their dentist appointments, but it is no accident that for their honeymoon they choose to go somewhere beautiful, and that, more often than not, they see the natural world better than the loner. The world of the lover is suffused with the magic of connection, with links that go beyond words—links that the poet must therefore attempt to forge with words, for the poet is, as Shakespeare reminded us, a lunatic.

When that poet is a man, it is not surprising if, heterosexual or homosexual, he associates inspiration with femaleness, for what it really represents is otherness. Joseph Brodsky makes the leap that "the principle of rhyme," in particular, "enables one to sense that proximity between seemingly disparate entities." Rhyme is, in fact—as I've heard Brodsky remark in the classroom—a form of love. When the poet is a woman, is her muse usually male? In one way, yes, it would appear so: historically, most women's poetry has consisted of heterosexual love poetry. As deeply and as essentially as the woman poet learns from male writers, however, Dickinson's reading list suggests that the presence of any female "tradition"—however wobbly and uneven it is—will sometimes serve her as the most necessary muse of all. The male muse may not demand enough of us; for what men have usually wanted of us, their coy mistresses, is our bodies rather than our minds. The woman writer rarely has been able to find—or even imagine—a man who admired her enough to scold her, as Philip Sydney's muse scolded him, "Fool, look in thy heart and write." The tradition of accomplished women, then, may have to serve both as the exacting muse and the all-accepting mother. If we never had a mother, we adopt one.

The time is overdue to admit that there is something of a vacuum in women's poetry, and that we abhor it. For a woman to concede this is not disloyal to her sex; it's the first step in the creation of an environment in which women artists of the future will flourish. But what can be done about the fact that the list of beloved women poets is not anywhere near so long as the list of beloved poets who were born male?

The most liberating response to the problem was the one Elizabeth Bishop chose. As her admirer James Merrill writes, "Lowell called her one of the four best women poets ever—a wreath that can hardly have pleased Miss Bishop, who kept her work from appearing in the many recent 'women's anthologies.' Better, from her point of view, to be one of the forty, one of the forty thousand best *poets*, and have done with it." And he adds, "If I raise the issue at all, it's to dissociate her from these shopworn polarities." For the working poet, moved by the sexless sunset or the sex-indeterminate beetle, the polarities are indeed shopworn, but perhaps as readers we may pursue the issue an inch further. For one thing that we can do about these two unequal lists is to read women poets of the past who have never been much read, let alone famous, and to discover whether or not they deserve to be.

Emily Dickinson, after all, would never have become one of the most revered poets in the world had her sister Lavinia not rescued her poems from the obscurity of a dresser drawer; and had her editor Mabel Loomis Todd not painstakingly, over years, transcribed nearly illegible scraps onto a bizarre typewriter that looked more like an astrolabe or an instrument of torture. Helen Hunt Jackson, that once celebrated, now nearly

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forgotten poet whose work Dickinson herself so admired, was another "sister" in this story, for she alone fully understood Dickinson's gifts while she was still alive. Jackson wrote to Dickinson urging her to publish: "You are a great poet—and it is a wrong to the day you live in, that you will not sing aloud," her letter went. "When you are what men call dead, you will be sorry you were so stingy." That has to be one of the most moving moments in American literary history.

And yet, and yet. Another reason so many of us are devoted to Dickinson is that we love the romance of her story. Not the lover's sort of romance, but the writer's. Dickinson suffered greatly in her love life, but she has to be one of the luckiest and unlikeliest great writers who ever lived. She chose to live in isolation, which meant she was saved from corruption at the hands of the literary crowd; no husband ever patted her head dismissively, no child ever interrupted her, and when her life was finished a team of disciples ensured her earthly immortality. If we do the necessary and difficult work of reappraising the literary "canon," and if we add some new names, new women's names, to the reading list, we will nonetheless have to settle for discoveries less dramatic than Lavinia Dickinson's, and we can't expect them to appear with a regular, democratic frequency.

For the fact is that we can't have it both ways. We can't simultaneously espouse Woolf's line that women haven't until recently been allowed the depth of education and the scope of experience to become Shakespeare, while also claiming that we really have an abundance of Shakespeares or even Woolfs, if anybody would just take the time to read us. Women's studies courses have mushroomed all over this country, with reading lists that combine established authors, forgotten authors, and women who never even thought of themselves as authors—farmers and factory workers and housewives whose letters and diaries carry a historical interest long after the deaths of the women themselves. This sort of social history can be fascinating, but I think it would be a great mistake to include it all under the heading of Literature in order to boast that women's output has been just as voluminous as men's.

But what is all this rating and counting and classifying of authors about anyway? If we set up one writer in competition against another, if we tally up writers of Type A against those of Type B, aren't we giving in to what some feminists tell us is the adversarial, aggressive mentality of patriarchal culture? We may think of Matthew Arnold's view of the function of criticism—"to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought"—and squirm in our chairs: Who's to say what is best, who's to say what is relevant?

Theoretically, these questions are of some interest. Practically speaking, most of us who are habitual, seasoned readers of poetry already have an answer. While acknowledging our profound differences of taste, we never doubt that there are good poems and terrible poems, and that the good ones are the only ones we have time for.

What else can be done about the fact that the list of the best women poets is not as long as the men's list? In addition to looking closely for unjustly neglected women, one might question whether some men poets have been overrated. I think, for some reason, of poets whose names contain double Ws—William Wordsworth, Walt Whitman, William Carlos Williams—and while I would be sorry to throw out the entire oeuvre of any of them, I confess that each of these estimable poets has at times bored me nearly to tears. It would do us no harm to be more judicious not only about poets but about poems, and to vow not to swallow a poet's whole menu unless all of it tastes good.

The problem with taking men poets down a peg, however, is that it's awfully hard to do so with discernment. The zeal to undo, and immediately, the centuries of neglect, condescension, and downright abuse endured by women poets—or lady poets, or poetesses, as they were once called—has resulted in the devaluation of some very great poets who were born male and (far worse) in the devaluation of poetry itself.

The big question, now, has to be asked: What *is* poetry? All sorts of definitions lodge in the mind. Dickinson said she knew it was poetry if she felt as if the top of her head were taken off, Moore said poetry was imaginary gardens with real toads in them, Pound insisted it had to be written at least as well as prose, Wordsworth claimed that it happened when emotion was recollected in tranquillity. Eliot took issue with Wordsworth: "Emotion recollected in tranquillity is an inexact formula," he wrote. ". . . Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things."

When defining a vast object, often the best manner of proceeding is to catalog what it isn't. And yet we acknowledge the truth of each of these definitions—even, or perhaps especially, Stevens's assertion that no definition is possible. We accept that perhaps the closest thing to a definition of poetry is the aggregate of all definitions, suspended impossibly in the mind like the complex, conflicting, personal, impersonal, harmonious beauty of a poem itself. In any case, I hope we know that poetry is nothing less than any one of these writers would have it.

What do all these definitions have to do with the battle of the sexes? One wishes that the question were entirely irrelevant. But along with the recent resurgence of interest in traditional and innovative verse forms among younger poets—a movement dubbed the New Formalism—a conflicting movement, or at least a bizarre set of assumptions, has taken shape. It contends that the formal tradition of English poetry—with its sonnets and rhymes royal and sestinas and villanelles, and even all the nameless nonce forms such as Herbert or Hardy devised for use in a single poem—is a male tradition, and thus must be rejected by women poets who want to find their own voices. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar write that Eliot's concept of poetry as an "escape from emotion" has helped to construct "an implicitly masculine aesthetic of hard, abstract, learned verse that is opposed to the aesthetic of soft, effusive, personal verse supposedly written by women and the Romantics."

One clings to that "supposedly"—to the notion that here is a division having less to do with innate character than social stereotype. And yet certain other feminists have unwittingly permitted themselves, and the rest of us women, to be pigeonholed. For them, the male poet who wrote in form stands, roughly speaking, for tranquillity, and the new woman poet who is honestly to address her subject matter stands for emotion. How can we fail to notice that when we divide poetry's function in half like this, we're left not with two groups of poems but with no real poems at all?

In this connection, consider a passage from *Writing a Woman's Life*, a recent book by Carolyn Heilbrun, in which she reflects on the difficulty women have in resolving their relationships with their fathers. Heilbrun quotes Maxine Kumin as remarking that a poem about her father was the hardest she ever wrote, and then editorializes that Kumin "wrote it originally in syllabics and rhyme, using these as a defense between her and the material of the poem." She adds that Kumin herself emphasized, "That's how terrified I was of writing it." Now, I don't know what proportion of blame Heil-

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brun and Kumin should each be assigned for this passage, but this is shameful stuff. What a suffocating prescription it is—that we must not only come to terms with our fathers, but must do so without benefit of meter or rhyme!

I suppose that Marianne Moore's penchant for syllabics is one reason that she is not widely taken up by women who believe in the legitimacy of "women's poetry." Another reason might be that she tends to write about animals, when she is supposed to write about her father. Well, we can always hope that her father *was* something of an animal, in which case Moore is all right. Yet we will not be able to argue away the claims for meter and rhyme so easily. Not all poets are interested in formal meters or rhyme, of course; and some of this century's best poems are free-form creations. But most of these have been written with *some* idea of form, *some* attention to a measurable music, and with an unreckonable indebtedness to the formal masters of the past.

Are we really ready to throw out Shakespeare and Milton for using their meters as a "defense," in Heilbrun's terms, between themselves and their material? The imaginary garden of poetry may be wilder looking than it used to be, but it is still a garden. And even if you or I choose not to plant a garden in neat rows, we will not be able to quash the garden-planting impulse in everybody else.

Ironically enough, what I—who would champion formal poetry—am arguing for is freedom. Freedom to write about our fathers or not, to write in meter or not. Freedom to think of ourselves as Women Poets, in capitals, or in lower case, or as Poets, in capitals, who hardly ever think about being women. When subject matter reigns supreme in poetry, the next step is to prescribe the subject matter. And a short step from there is prescribing the proper feelings about the subject matter. Heilbrun offers, again unwittingly, a cautionary passage: "What does it mean unambiguously to be a woman?" she asks, and answers that historically it has meant "to put a man at the center of one's life and to allow to occur only what honors his prime position." So far, so good; it's in the next sentence that I get scared. "Occasionally, women have put God or Christ in the place of a man," she adds, and remarks either scornfully or sorrowfully, "the results are the same: one's own desires and quests are always secondary."

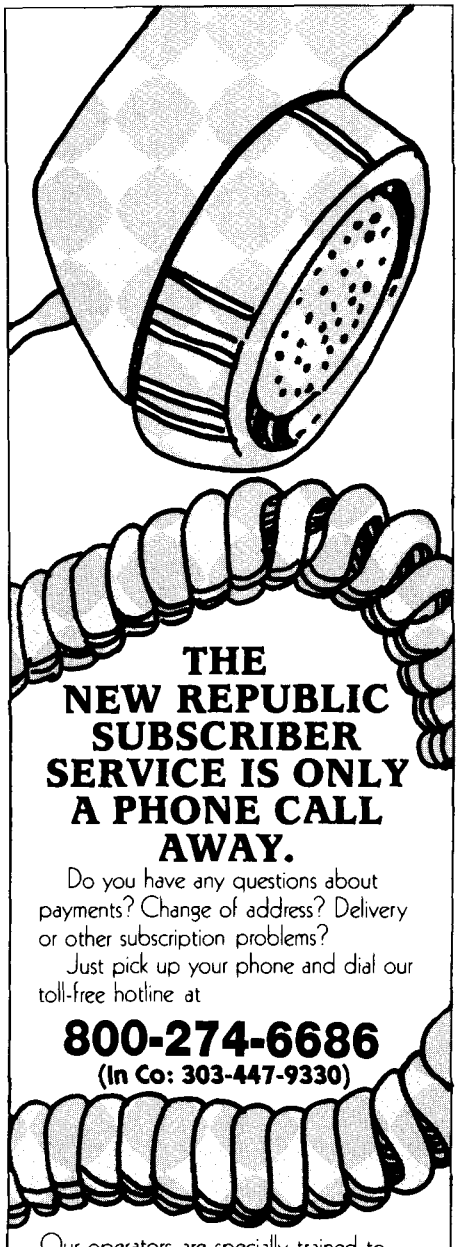
Now undoubtedly, to many of us the Judeo-Christian tradition has seemed to offer women a bad deal. Suffice it to say that the adoration of Mary and the greatness of the women saints may never entirely erase for women a consciousness of the ways we have been wronged in both Old Testament and New. Tillie Olsen has set forth some of these wrongs in telegraphic style: "Religion when all believed. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. May the wife's womb never cease from bearing. Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man. Let the woman learn in silence and in all subjection. Contrary to biological birth fact: Adam's rib. The Jewish male morning prayer: thank God I was not born a woman."

When we women are reminded of our place in the Judeo-Christian hierarchy—and I'd guess that many of us daily spend a good deal of subconscious energy trying to forget it—Heilbrun's implicit suggestion that women writers, or women in general, must dethrone God or Christ looks pretty inviting. The real point, however, is that our personal desires and quests are always secondary, whether we are Christians or atheists. Is there a mature adult who honestly believes that he or she comes first? Even more to the point, has there ever been a mature, great poet of any stripe who did not seek access to something greater than him- or herself?

And what if our desire *is* God? If that form of desire is to be disallowed, then the achievement of all sorts of women writers who put themselves second after God—writers from the twelfth-century Heloise to the twentieth-century Flannery O'Connor—dissolves into nothingness. And a good chunk of English poetry, particularly of the seventeenth century—the devotional poetry of the dean of St. Paul's, John Donne, and the country parson George Herbert—dissolves away, too.

Such misgivings must be at the bottom of my discomfort at having my book of poems assigned to the women's section of the bookstore. My books, however modest, represent an effort to speak not only of being a woman, and not only to women. Joyce Carol Oates, in a brief essay titled "The (Woman) Writer," puts the word "woman" in parentheses, and this, it seems to me, strikes precisely the right note. We cannot excise the word, or excise it all the time, since all women writers begin as women. But if we hope to play the resounding chords of human experience, and even extrahuman experience, the word "writer" will have to be the tonic key in which we do it.

And yet, and yet. We have arrived at a resounding chord, and now must acknowledge that it is dissonant. For the means by which most men writers throughout history have discovered how to speak selflessly of the broadly human, the universal, the spiritual is through



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selfishly shutting themselves off from domestic distractions. True, male writers have had to pay the bills with hack work that threatened to kill high art altogether. But women writers have had not only plenty of breadwinning to do, but the childbearing and the child-raising and the laundry and the potato-peeling too. Woolf put this memorably over half a century ago: she said she had to kill the Angel of the House before it killed her.

Woolf belonged to a subspecies of woman writer—the fiction writer—that has generally had much better luck than the poet in juggling the thousand tasks of women. Some fiction writers actually make money at their work, which frees at least a little time for the next story. Poets generally make no money, and thus they make no time. And that is a serious problem, for although the poet is apt to write at shorter length than the fiction writer, she evidently needs more uninterrupted time. She can accommodate herself less to daily social distractions, partly because she is usually not writing about society to the degree the novelist is, partly because a poet, if worth her salt, is writing with a more concentrated attentiveness to language.

In any case, though fiction-writing is never easy, it is apparently easier if you don't have children. Most women writers of fiction in history have been childless, and it is only now that we can amass a long list of distinguished women fiction writers and remark with nothing less than joy at how many are mothers: Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer, Hortense Calisher, Edna O'Brien, Cynthia Ozick, Joan Didion, Alison Lurie, Muriel Spark, Alice Munro, etc., etc. The list of the best women poets in our language, by contrast, is a nearly unbroken catalog of childlessness: Elizabeth Barrett Browning (who had one child, late), Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti, Charlotte Mew, Marianne Moore, Louise Bogan, Elizabeth Bishop, May Swenson, etc., etc. If we take comfort in remembering that Sylvia Plath was a mother, it is not for long: we know what happened to her.

Since childbearing is the experience that may most radically distinguish the lives of women from the lives of men, and since women writers who want to be mothers ought to be able to make this choice with no more than the usual amount of terror, I take the dearth of excellent mother-poets to be very disturbing indeed. I want to disbelieve what the statistics seem to tell us. They seem to be telling me, in any case, that the physical and emotional energy I put into my children is teaching me selflessness every day, and that if I don't learn to be selfish soon I will lack both the time and the assertiveness of spirit to have even a chance at writing the best poems I am capable of. Meanwhile, of course, I want to transcend the sense of self altogether, as Donne and Herbert hoped to do. The paradox simply will not go away.

Yet I hope there's a more cheerful way of looking at these conflicts and paradoxes. Women in our time understand them better than any generation of women in history. If no great English poem has yet been written about childbirth, maybe one of us will be the one to juggle the paradoxes just long enough to achieve it. And we will not address ourselves only to "women's subjects," either. We will see the word "woman" in italics in some poems, and in parentheses in others, and we won't read it at all in others. If artistic freedom means anything, it means that every poet, and every poem by every poet, is unique. And it means that we will sometimes (or often) speak in the bold voice too little heard yet from women, the voice that dares to serve as arbiter of taste and ethics, analyst of politics and religion, champion of the purity of art—the voice that won't die of mortification if somebody else disagrees. This is the voice that the 31-year-old Emily Dickinson, writing in 1862, had already mastered:

> I reckon—when I count at all—
> First—Poets—then the sun—
> Then Summer—Then the Heaven of God—
> And then—the List is done—
>
> But—looking back—the First so seems
> To Comprehend the Whole—
> The Others look a needless Show—
> So I write—Poets—All— ●

New Man, New City

By Jed Perl

Selected Writings and Interviews by Barnett Newman edited by John P. O'Neill

(Knopf, 331 pp., $40)

The painter Barnett Newman's life is a New York story, from its immigrant beginning to its famous-artist ending. The story is right there in the name: he's a New Man for a New City. His *Selected Writings and Interviews* are informed by a blunt, no-nonsense diction that recalls a number of intellectuals of the generation that came up in the 1930s, among them Clement Greenberg and Philip Rahv. Like those men, Newman sees America's distance from Europe as the country's ace in the hole. New York artists and intellectuals aren't taken in by fancy-schmancy arguments, they can cut through the Old World bull.

In 1943, when Newman wrote a little essay about the charms of downtown New York (it's one of a large number of previously unpublished pieces included in this collection), he wanted to debunk the sentimental view of America that was presented by the painters and the writers of the American scene, the "professional Americans . . . who have gone to Europe to come back yelling 'America' " and think that "America is the fields of Kansas and the dirty waters of the Mississippi." Newman wants to point out that New York isn't just "an exercise in modern construction"; it's also a city with some backbone—with "the sense of history, the charm of age and tradition." Newman, who hadn't even been to Europe, wants to persuade us that New York has everything that Europe has.

Newman's subject is the area around City Hall; and the description that he presents seems intended to demonstrate, all at once, that there is a particularly American brand of beauty, and that it can stand up to the European brand. He speaks of City Hall Park as "a perfect example of an old American common." He speaks of cast iron buildings that "are immaculate, fresh with new paint, well kept, an architectural monument to a certain period of American taste." "The tip of the island of Manhattan," he writes, "forms a compact heterogeneous cosmopolis where one can still have the charming feeling of living in two centuries, where one can still catch the friendliness of the small town, where one can still savor the distinctive American flavor." But this is also—New Yorkers can't avoid saying so—the city of the present:

> All the subways converge there within a block of each other, adding to the feeling of concentration. The sense of focus, of people and things and time, is immense, and one feels one's self at the steering wheel of enterprise. We can forgive the

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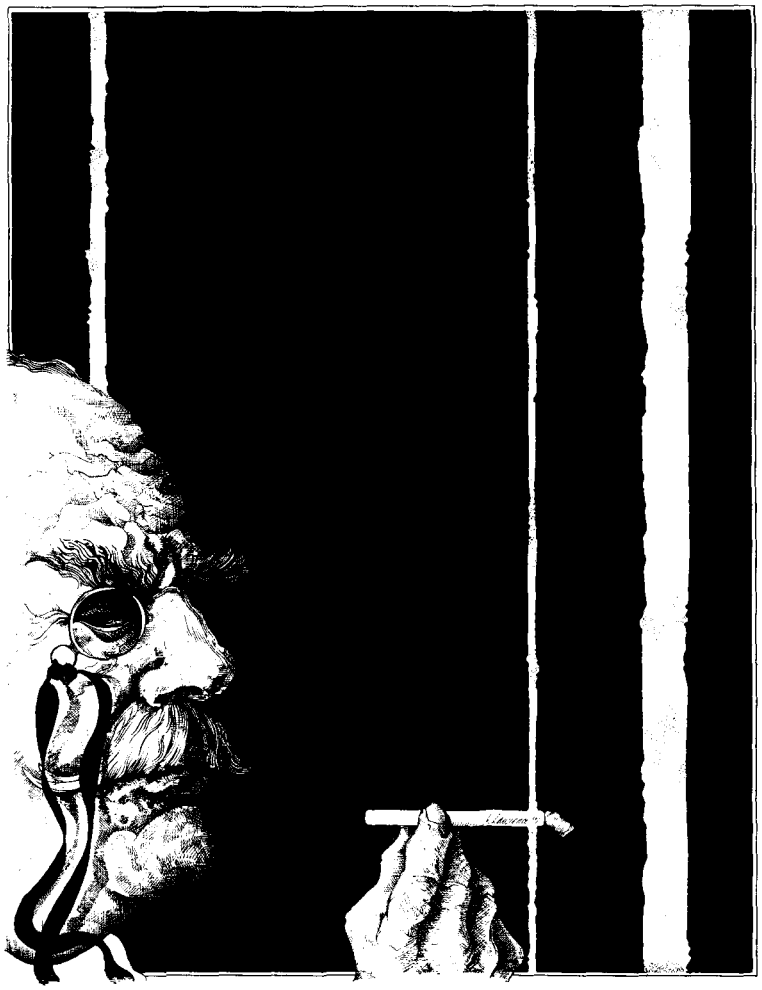
pride New Yorkers feel that from here the country and the world are being run.

"If I can make it here I'll make it anywhere," goes the New York anthem of the 1980s. But when I think of Newman's beginnings, more than fifty years ago, I imagine that he could have made it nowhere else. Newman, who was the child of immigrants recently arrived from Poland, confronted the hard times of the 1930s with an optimism that is itself an aspect of the immigrant mentality. If you can change your nationality and survive, then you can control your destiny. In some respects his beginnings recall Greenberg's, who graduated from Syracuse University in 1930, three years after Newman graduated from City College. In both cases the fathers had been successful in business, so there seemed to be a promise of family assistance as one looked toward the impecuniousness of the artist's or writer's life.



BARNETT NEWMAN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Newman, like Greenberg, worked for his father after college. Newman's father, in the menswear business, was hard hit by the crash. Both Newman and Greenberg ended up working, for a time, in the public sector. Newman spent much of the '30s as a full-time substitute art teacher in the New York City public school system, for, as he explained in 1938, "a maximum salary of about $1,350 a year." Yet he felt this to be a temporary situation, like working for his father, not a defining condition. The world had changed so much for these families, surely it would keep changing. Newman was fiercely independent, a sort of anarchist in politics, and against the hard facts there was always the clarifying ideal that even at the very end of his life he would be talking about: "the possibility of an open society, of an open world, not of a closed institutional world."

Yet institutions were all around him. Still in his 20s, Newman decided in 1933 that what New York needed was a mayor dedicated to cultural life—and he presented himself as a write-in candidate. He and his running mate, Alexander Borodulin, called for, among other things, free music and art schools, a free city conservatory, a free city university, a clean air department, the establishment of extensive waterfront parks, and the banning of cars from all the parks. Five years later Newman was still battling the establishment, only the battle was scaled down. He was teaching in the school system—partly because he didn't like the idea of participating in the WPA, which he felt was welfare—but he could not get a permanent teacher's license.

When he organized a show of artists who had been refused licenses, he explained, "[We] do the same work and assume the same responsibilities as regularly appointed teachers. [We] *are* regular teachers, every day except payday." After Newman failed the licensing exam, he took a copy of the exam, which had a section about mural composition, to show Thomas Hart Benton. Then he wrote a piece for *The New York Times*, publicizing Benton's belief that even he—the pre-eminent mural artist in the country—couldn't have passed the test:

> When [Benton] was told that the board uses a numerical scale to mark drawing ability, Mr. Benton was amazed. "I know of no method that can properly evaluate artistic expression mathematically or mechanically," he said. "Any scale attempting such a thing is ridiculous."

Newman and a group of substitutes were allowed to take the exam again—and again he failed.

Newman started studying at the Art Students League when he was 17. He was an artist without natural ease or facility. He disliked his early work so much that, deep into the 1940s, he destroyed everything he did almost as soon as it was finished. And he never really had a "hand"—a way of handling paint, of giving the viewer a sense of the surface of the painting as a beautifully made thing. But he had the desire and the drive to create here in America what he called "a living myth for us in our own time"—a myth that would be abstract, no less, yet also, as he was to say over and over again, "real." That idea of a new American reality, a new American subject, echoes through the pages of this collection, as it echoed through the conversations that Newman had with de Kooning and Hofmann and Motherwell and all the other artists who gathered at "Subjects of the Artist," the school that Newman helped organize in a loft in Greenwich Village in 1949.

Newman's ideas about art are dramatic, and also a little woolly. He presents himself as a man who is capable of being very clear about mystical matters. But in a manner that can perhaps be described as Whitmanesque, he sometimes seems to confuse his own certainty with clarity, which is quite another thing. For Newman, Americanness meant an interest in primitive American Indian art. In 1949 he went to Ohio to see the Indian burial mounds, which are "perhaps the greatest art monuments in the world, for somehow the Egyptian pyramid by comparison is nothing but an ornament." There's some charm to this avant-garde assertion of the pre-eminence of American art. But isn't it also a little insane? In collaboration with Betty Parsons, he organized a number of exhibitions of Indian art; and, in "The Ideographic Picture" show of 1947, he

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gathered together contemporary New York painting—his own work along with that of de Kooning, Reinhardt, Rothko, and Still—and argued for a continuation of an indigenous American tradition. Newman saw the new New York painting as echoing the ancient American Indian artist's sense that "a shape was a living thing, a vehicle for an abstract thought-complex, a carrier of the awesome feelings [the artist] felt before the terror of the unknowable."

Newman's finest painting, *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* (1951), is about awesome feelings. It's a very large simple painting that, I think, justifies the amount of space that it takes up on a wall. This elongated red rectangle is, first, a grand, blunt, expansive gesture. To this primal horizontal gesture Newman opposes a series of small vertical gestures—they're a counterweight. The color is warm yet subdued; and the stripes, Newman's "zips," have a delicacy about them. His subject here is exaltation. This was, no doubt, what Newman was after when he said that the meaning of the painting was "that man can be or is sublime in his relation to his sense of being aware."

Vir Heroicus Sublimis is a painting about bigness—the bigness of New Yorkers who believed that they were "themselves the leaders and bearers of the artistic tradition of Europe instead of, as heretofore, only its reflection." Newman is pulling the last of the old-fashioned underpinnings out of easel painting. The painting gives the sense of an artist who's letting go, taking off. If it were not called *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, it could be called "The Sublime is Now," the title that Newman gave to a 1948 essay published in the artists' magazine *Tiger's Eye*.

The sublime, for Newman, was an American matter. "The failure of European art to achieve the sublime," he explained, "is due to this blind desire to exist inside the reality of sensation (the objective world, whether distorted or pure) and to build an art within a framework of pure plasticity (the Greek ideal of beauty, whether that plasticity be a romantic active surface or a classic stable one)." Looking at Newman's paintings, we may feel that they bear the impress of European art: the first group of works that he did not destroy, from the '40s, echoes the forest imagery of Max Ernst, and the pared-down abstractions of the 1950s and 1960s would seem impossible without the heritage of Neoplasticism and the Bauhaus. Still, for Newman the hot-and-cold European tendencies exemplified by Surrealism and Constructivism were all somehow compromised by their indebtedness to a European pictorial tradition.

He complained of the "dogmatic positions of the purists, neoplasticists, and other formalists." There was something labored, limiting about the august genealogy of this European work. Of all the European movements, only Impressionism seemed to have appealed to Newman—and this was the modern movement that was most a matter of primary impulses. America was about primary impulses. "I believe," he said in "The Sublime is Now,"

> that here in America, some of us, free from the weight of European culture, are finding the answer, by completely denying that art has any concern with the problem of beauty and where to find it. . . . We are reasserting man's natural desire for the exalted, for a concern with our relationship to the absolute emotions.

Newman's model was the fearless imagery of American Indian art—an art that is abstract, but in which abstraction is a primary rather than a secondary reality. Looking back to Europe, he saw a kind of slavery, an art crippled by pedagogy, procedures, the backward glance that informs even the most daring revolution. When Hans Hofmann, the archetypal European-in-America who had known Matisse and Braque in Paris in the first years of the century, suggested to Jackson Pollock that he work from nature, Pollock's famous reply was, "I am nature." In a sense Newman's reply to European art was, "I am art." Art—and culture, too. When Erwin Panofsky wrote to *ARTnews* to complain about what turned out to be a typo in the spelling in a caption for *Vir Heroicus Sublimis*, Newman (with the help of Meyer Schapiro) entered into a controversy about Latin grammar. Barnett Newman correcting Erwin Panofsky's Latin is something to contemplate: an example of crazy American gutsiness to set next to Edmund Wilson's improving Vladimir Nabokov's Russian.

In the early '50s Newman had his first one-man shows at the Betty Parsons Gallery. His work did not find a warm welcome among the avant-garde. Newman was a painter of flat, uninflected surfaces at a time when de Kooning was king on Tenth Street, when painterliness was the ruling mode in advanced New York. It seems to have been the worst time in Newman's life. He had found the world he wanted to have a major part in, but he kept being pushed off the stage.

In this collection of his writings we are given the letters, the arguments, the positions held and pursued. After two shows, in 1950 and 1951, Newman found the hostile reaction too much, and ceased to exhibit. In 1953 he was writing to the painter and collector Alfonso Ossorio that "the conditions do not yet exist for me, either physically or in the realm of ideas, that can make possible a direct, innocent attitude toward an isolated piece of my work." Two years later Newman was calculating his relations with more successful artists, nursing hurts. He wrote to Sidney Janis as to why he could not attend the opening of a Rothko show: "I am frankly bored with the uninspired, or to put it more accurately, I am bored with the too easily inspired."

The same year, 1955, brought Newman his first major critical encomium. Greenberg wrote about Newman as a major talent in his seminal essay " 'American-Type' Painting." "Newman's huge and darkly burning pictures constitute perhaps the most direct attack yet on the easel convention." But even in this instance Newman's response was disgruntled, argumentative. He wrote to Greenberg that there were serious "errors of fact." He never used the term "buckeye," which Greenberg said Newman used in relation to Still's painting. And

Small Boy at a Window Sill

While you stacked your alphabet
blocks in a warmer room,
I had stapled up half-clear plastic
over your playroom window
to keep the warm air in.

And the things of the outside world
could not then be squinted from shadow,
not even the bursting yellow
box elder could clarify its backlit lines
out of its own fuzzy dazzle.

When you finally wandered in
long past when I had called for you,
we both saw that even the wrens
cracking seed at the sill
could not be called to their shapes

as three sprang at your steps
(vague and beyond the plastic)
so quickly by and near
similitude. And then you pointed—
"This! This!"—your word for whatever

you had no words for.
And I knew, yet asked, "What?
What?" as you commanded "This!"
—that that translucency be torn apart,
and knowing it would get worse.

KEVIN CANTWELL

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the reference to Newman soaking pigment into canvas was inaccurate: "You know that my paint quality is heavy, solid, direct, the opposite of a stain."

In the mid-1950s Newman stopped painting for a few years. His entire output is not particularly large. Of *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* he once said, "It took a second but the second took a lifetime." He was that kind of painter. The work of the years around 1950 is the strongest. In the paintings of the latter 1950s and 1960s, the color, which was never particularly brilliant, becomes rather schematic. He is best with warm colors. His blues and white-on-whites do not appeal to the eye. There is something conceptual, not quite of the studio, about his whole activity; and so it is logical that fame came after the cult of the paint-splattered studio had had its day. Only in the early 1960s, when they began to look like the climax of a century of increasingly minimal statements, did Newman's yard-wide planes of color and eccentric formats and single-form sculptures begin to be taken seriously.

In the 1960s Donald Judd, the one artist of consequence among the Minimalists, wrote of Newman that "the color areas and stripes are not obscured or diluted by a hierarchy of composition and a range of associations. The few parts, all equally primary, comprise the quality of a painting." Newman's paintings seemed to cast the works of Mondrian and Malevich, with their fairly intricate compositions, into the past. Compared with a Newman, a Mondrian looked like a period piece, almost Victorian in its concentrated internal scale. Newman fit in with the modern-and-more-so taste of the 1960s: this was high art for a time when people wanted plexiglas, not plastic, wanted miniskirts, not short skirts.

To some it might have seemed odd that this work was the creation of a man who, with his dark suits and monocle and mustache, looked like a figure from another era. But perhaps Newman's career demonstrated a connection between the old Wall Street New York and the new Madison Avenue New York. The city still valued the single-minded, the individualistic. If one side of New York was that it was the only part of America that understood Europe, another side was that it was in a position to reject Europe completely.

Newman's writings, with their combination of fierceness and provincialness, put us in touch with what was perhaps the essential spirit of the old New York avant-garde. It's touching to read a 1943-44 letter from Newman to Adolph and Esther Gottlieb, describing Newman's visit to the Peabody Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Newman admired the ship models, the bird collection, and the ethnological collection, which "may not be the best in the world, but there are many interesting things definitely worth seeing." This was a long way from Picasso discovering African art at the Ethnographic Museum of the Trocadéro in Paris.

Yet the Americans, amazingly enough, had the will to turn the Peabody and other such experiences into the Trocadéro of a new modernism. It was Greenberg's genius, in his criticism of the 1940s, that he was able to link Paris to New York in a sequence of formal parallels, to speak of certain Pollocks as being the best thing since Analytical Cubism. And while Newman had his gripes with Greenberg (too formal for Newman), in a general way Greenberg's ambitions accorded with the ambitions of painters like Newman, who wanted to believe that New Yorkers were (I repeat the quotation, but repetition is of the essence) "the leaders and bearers of the artistic tradition of Europe instead of, as heretofore, only its reflection."

What an act of will, of faith, of belief this American revolution in art seems to have been. In the accounts of those years that are commonly presented today, we hear much about the reverence that the Americans felt for Picasso, for Miró. But this is not a note that is sounded in Newman's writings. I wonder if too much is now made of the American's reverence for the European fathers. Of course they looked to Europe; they had no other choice. But do historians and critics nowadays overemphasize the image of the Abstract Expressionists as good, reverent sons? The fact is that part of what the new American painters were saying was, "Let's get on with it, damn the past."

And why would they not feel that way? So many of them were immigrants: de Kooning from Holland, Pollock from the American West, Gorky from Armenia, and then all the Jews. And here they were in New York. No art capital had grown up so rapidly. Paris's miracle years, 1850-1950, had their origins in the royal patronage of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But in New York there was barely a lifetime to separate the landscapists of the nineteenth century, fine painters but mere footnotes to world art, from the glittery art capital that the city would become in the 1960s. In the end, Newman would tour the Louvre with the critic Pierre Schneider and rank the paintings, and he would rethink his relationship with Judaism. But these were the acts of an éminence grise; they were not a confession of debts, of artistic origins.

There's something more than a little startling about the egotism and the bravura of Newman's writings. "The present movement in America," he explains in 1945, "transcends nature. It is concerned with metaphysical implications, with the divine mysteries. These new painters have brought the artist back to his original, primitive role—the maker of gods." This is egotism beyond anything known in European modernism. Matisse, asked about God, would only observe that when he worked he had some sense of a connection or an awareness. The Europeans, above all else, had a sense of process and procedure, of human history with its revolutions that turn into traditions.

To Newman, however, all this was constricting, anathema. When he painted a *Stations of the Cross* series in his later years, he could not mention, at least in print, that Matisse had created one a few years before. There is, in Newman's art, a denial of origins, a rush to resolutions; and one feels, looking back, that it had its price. Today Abstract Expressionism looks like a tremendous impressive facade, behind which is an unfinished palace, a structure of corridors that go nowhere, of rooms that cannot be entered because the doors and windows have not been put in. ("A joke went the rounds," Harold Rosenberg recounted, "to the effect that Newman had closed the door, Rothko had pulled down the shades, and Reinhardt had turned out the lights.")

Of course, if Newman had accepted the European heritage, if he had been a more tradition-conscious artist, he would no doubt never have found himself, just before his death in 1970, sitting in a gallery devoted to his work in the show "New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940-1970," at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He was, despite the monocle, a radical artist in a city that had, after all, a passion for radical art. He'd flunked the city's art teacher certification test, twice, but ended up with his work hanging in the city's premier museum. This

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ing in the city's premier museum. This was a version of the Albert-Einstein-flunked-arithmetic stories that had been told around the dinner tables of how many immigrant families, a way of asserting the possibility of triumph against all odds. America, America! *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* is a piece of American iconography. Hanging at the Museum of Modern Art, it is an image in the pictorial epic that is New York City—an epic that includes the Brooklyn Bridge, the skyscrapers, and the Statue of Liberty, that ultimate American icon that Barnett Newman's parents probably saw as they sailed into the new land.

JED PERL is the author of *Gallery Going: Four Seasons in the Art World*, to be published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich in

Where There's a Will

BY CHARLES LARMORE

Schopenhauer and the Wild Years of Philosophy
by Rüdiger Safranski
translated by Ewald Osers

(Harvard University Press, 408 pp., $30)

Windbag, charlatan, intellectual Caliban: this is some of the abuse that Schopenhauer hurled at Hegel after his death. It was perhaps the most famous of philosophical hatreds. In part it sprang from the resentment that young faculty are bound to feel for their senior colleagues; in the early 1820s the fresh *Privatdozent* Schopenhauer scheduled his classes for the same hour as Professor Hegel's, and almost nobody attended. Yet Schopenhauer's hatred for Hegel had deeper, more intellectual roots. They were divided by utterly opposed conceptions of what it is to think philosophically.

Schopenhauer was not at a loss to describe their philosophical disagreements in cool analytical terms, but nothing he wrote expresses their differences as vividly as what each of them did when, early in their careers, their paths happened to cross with Napoleon's. When Napoleon led his victorious army into Jena in October 1806, Hegel was there, finishing up his first great work, *The Phenomenology of Mind*. That night Jena burned. Hegel's apartment was looted, and he lost nearly everything, including all his underwear. Far from being frightened or angry, however, he was beside himself with delight. The conclusion of his book had proclaimed that philosophy should aspire not to rise above history, but to be one with it, in "the Golgotha of the Absolute Spirit." And now, just as he was putting the final touches on this philosophical breakthrough, who should ride through town but History personified, Napoleon himself! "I saw the Emperor, that world-soul," he exclaimed to a friend. Napoleon took no notice of Hegel, of course, but this, too, was as it should be: Philosophy had called upon History, and History had returned the favor, though naturally without knowing that it was doing so. For Hegel, no more spectacular confirmation of his thought seemed possible.

Seven years later Napoleon's army was converging on Berlin. There was Schopenhauer, at work on his own first book, *The Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*. Unlike Hegel, however, he had no wish to do his philosophizing in Napoleon's vicinity. He took refuge in the idyllic village of Rudolstadt to get away from the din of current events. His flight was a matter of principle. In his eyes, history was miserable and tedious. Pessimism was the only honest attitude toward life. The task of philosophy, he believed then and always, was to cultivate "the better consciousness . . . where neither personality nor causality . . . exists anymore." Luckily, he was able to complete his book before Austrian troops appeared in Rudolstadt toward the end of the year.

For Hegel, philosophy was the drive to merge, to feel at home in the world. For Schopenhauer, it was the discipline of homelessness, of standing back. "Life is such a sorry affair," he once remarked, "I have resolved to spend it reflecting upon it." As Rüdiger Safranski shows in his understanding and entertaining intellectual biography, these were the terms in which Schopenhauer stood opposed not just to Hegel, but to German thought generally in "the wild years" of the first half of the nineteenth century, when the heady theme of Idealist philosophy and Romantic literature was reconciliation, the reclaiming of heaven and history as expressions of man's own innermost being. Safranski's book moves skillfully back and forth between this dominant culture and Schopenhauer's own intellectual development, and we are given a good grasp of Schopenhauer's life and thought (though Safranski could sometimes have been more philosophically probing). We also come to see why fame came to Schopenhauer so late, not until the 1850s, when visionary dreams of oneness had finally dissipated.

Schopenhauer was born in Danzig in 1788, the son of a patrician merchant. The roots of his pessimism lie in a very dismal childhood. His father was austere, often absent, and at the end sick and morose; he committed suicide when Arthur was 17. His mother bridled at bourgeois domesticity, and quickly after her husband's death she sold the house in Hamburg (where the family had relocated) and moved to Weimar, to soak in the cultural life around Goethe. Not only did she become good friends with Goethe, but she also blossomed into a rather renowned novelist of the time. Arthur himself, though given to literary ambitions from an early age, was not likewise liberated by his father's death. He felt bound by the promise that he had made to train as a merchant—a promise that his father had extorted by offering him the choice between going to university, as Arthur wished, or accompanying his parents on a summer tour of Europe, which he could not resist, before becoming apprenticed.

Only after much coaxing from his mother did the young Schopenhauer abandon his merchant apprenticeship, return to his studies, and enter Göttingen University in 1809. Though free at last, he felt little gratitude to his mother. Indeed, over the following years their relationship steadily worsened, ending in a complete rupture in 1814, after which they never saw each other again. The causes were many: squabbles over the inheritance, Arthur's resentment at his mother's new male companions, his mother's anger at his brooding haughtiness, which reminded her only too well of her former husband. There was even an intellectual rivalry, for she had become famous while he remained unknown. In one particularly bitter episode, his mother, picking up a copy of *The Fourfold Root*, taunted him with the comment that "no doubt this is something for pharmacists," which he countered with the jab that "it will still be read when scarcely a copy of your writings can be found in the lumber room." (His mother was not struck speechless. "Of your writings, the entire printing will still

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be in the shops," she replied.) In embracing a thoroughly pessimistic view of life, as he did from early adolescence, Schopenhauer must have had his own life in mind.

Schopenhauer's academic career turned out to be no more successful than his family life. Having transferred from Göttingen to Berlin, he submitted *The Fourfold Root* as his dissertation and received his doctorate, but the book went unnoticed. In 1819 he published his great work, *The World as Will and Representation*, but it, too, met with little interest. Then there was his futile attempt to dethrone Hegel with his teaching. By the end of the 1820s, he was resolved to give up university life, and was smart enough to flee Berlin during the cholera epidemic of 1831 (which, incidentally, killed Hegel). He moved to Frankfurt as a private scholar, and lived there the rest of his life.

It was in Frankfurt, in the 1850s, that (as Safranski puts it) the mountain came to the prophet. The fame and the esteem that Schopenhauer had coveted for decades at last became his. Not only was he a center of philosophical interest, widely read and surrounded by disciples, but he was also elevated into one of the city's chief objects of curiosity and pride. The gargantuan midday meals he took in his favorite restaurant were keenly observed, and walking a poodle, as he had done for years, became the latest fad. Schopenhauer was content. In the preface to the third edition of *Will and Representation*, published in 1859, a year before his death, he fondly quoted the words of Petrarch: "If anyone who wanders all day arrives toward evening, it is enough."

One of the best passages in Safranski's book concerns the nature of the philosophical fame that Schopenhauer enjoyed at the end of his life. In large part it was based on a misunderstanding, which Schopenhauer himself chose to foster. The book that won him the bulk of his readers was not *The Fourfold Root*, nor *Will and Representation*, but his *Aphorisms on Practical Wisdom*, published in 1851. Let us assume that life is worth living, he argued there, and that we must do our bit in the human comedy. As we go about our tasks, we should always remember nonetheless that ultimately nothing really matters, that we must be "at the same time spectators and actors." This outlook recommended his thought to the bourgeoisie, who had given up on Romantic visions but saw no point in despair.

The leading assumption, however, was one that, in his more honest moments, in his philosophical treatises, Schopenhauer explicitly rejected. Life is not worth living, he maintained, and this is exactly why we should aim at being spectators. Schopenhauer's "practical wisdom," in other words, was a calculated contradiction. His deepest commitment was to detachment, to passivity, to a spectator's life. He scorned participation. It was this position that earned him a different and truer kind of fame—but only after his death, when his philosophy began to exercise an enormous influence, not least on Nietzsche, Burckhardt, Mann, and Wittgenstein.

The key notion of Schopenhauer's true philosophy was, of course, the will. The role that it played in his thought was derived from the basically Kantian framework in which he did philosophy. Schopenhauer agreed with Kant that our knowledge of the world is conditioned by the forms of thought or "representation" in which we cannot help but think of it. But he put forward a considerably more streamlined account of these necessary forms of thought than did Kant. Whatever we grasp of the world, Schopenhauer claimed, we understand in accordance with one of four forms of the principle of sufficient reason. Our understanding of the world is geared to answering the question "why?," which for us must always take one of four forms: we can look for the cause of an effect, for the justification for a belief, for the axioms for a theorem, or for the motives of an action. While keen to insist on the difference between these four forms, Schopenhauer was also interested in what they have in common. In general, he held, our understanding does not view things singly and independently. It seeks relations of dependence.

So much, then, for the world as representation (which is the subject of *The Fourfold Root*). Like Kant, however, Schopenhauer could not shake off the question of what the world might be apart from how we necessarily represent it to ourselves: the question of "the thing in itself." One answer, he believed, was surely incorrect, and it was the answer that Kant himself was inclined to give. We must not, contrary to Kant, think of the thing-in-itself as the cause of our representations of the world, for cause-and-effect is precisely one of our forms of thought. Schopenhauer picked up this clever objection from the writings of his philosophy teacher at Göttingen, the skeptic G. E. Schulze. But he also came to believe that Kant's mistake rested on a deeper misconception.

Kant held—wrongly, according to Schopenhauer—that reason has a natural tendency to follow relations of dependence all the way back to the independent foundations on which everything else depends, and thus to look for the cause of all cause-and-effect relations. This search for the prime mover was, in Schopenhauer's view, a residue of religion, not a feature of reason. For him, reason was by nature this-worldly, content to remain within the limits of experience, impelled to explain (in the four ways) one thing in terms of another, but not to explain everything as a whole. Schopenhauer has a right to be called one of the first "anti-foundationalists."

We might well wonder, then, why he should have cared about what the world might be "in itself." Why should the anti-foundationalist have proclaimed as his great discovery that in itself the world is will? The answer lies in recognizing that *The World as Will and Representation*, in which he announced the discovery, gives a rather misleading picture of his underlying motivations. The argument in the book moves from the metaphysical doctrine of the will as ultimate reality to the pessimistic ethic of the denial of the will. But as Safranski rightly remarks, Schopenhauer's own order of thought was the reverse. His first commitment was to stand back from the futility of life: the disproportion between our efforts and our achievements meant that life was at bottom a matter of blind will. It was only later, in his university studies with Schulze, that he became convinced of Kant's claim that our knowledge of the world is relative to forms of thought in which we cannot help but think. Kant may have been wrong about the nature of reason, he believed, but not about this fundamental idea. So his project became to fit this later metaphysics with his earlier ethics. An obvious move was to connect the will, that senseless motor of life, with what the world "in itself" might be like.

The precise way that Schopenhauer made this connection is philosophically interesting and frequently misunderstood. He held (contrary to Kant) that since reason carries no impetus to push beyond experience, we must somehow look at experience itself to get an inkling of what the world is apart from it. "My philosophy does not talk about some Cloud-cuckoo-land, but about this world," he once observed. "It reads the world before us like a table of hieroglyphs." He believed that we are ourselves the key to the code. When we look at the world as knowing subjects, plotting the relations of dependence among things, we consider our body as one object among others. We may have a bit more information about it than about many other things, but from the stand-

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point of understanding how the world goes, there is nothing exceptional about it. And yet, he pointed out, we also think of our body as we think of no other thing in the world. We think of it as "our own" body. We do not just know it from the outside, we feel it from the inside. And to feel our body as our own is to experience it as that through which we act in the world. In short, in the experience of our own will we seem to have a knowledge of ourselves that was not obtained from the outside, by observation, as with our knowledge of other things. We know our will by being it.

This idea of self-knowledge "without observation" has played an important role in contemporary philosophy, largely due to Wittgenstein, who may have picked it up from Schopenhauer. But Schopenhauer himself put it to a deep metaphysical use. If we grasp our will from within, by being it, then it would seem that this knowledge is not like our other knowledge, that it is not filtered through forms of thought that we impose upon the world. It would seem, on the contrary, that we are acquainted with what the will is "in itself," and that here experience opens out onto ultimate reality. Moreover, if the will is the metaphysical core of human life, Schopenhauer reasoned, why may we not generalize and claim that it is what the whole world is "in itself"? The sciences themselves, he noted, take "force" as their ultimate category, which differs from the will only by being more obscure.

Schopenhauer was quite proud of the fact that his metaphysics of the will was drawn in this way from the world of experience. "The solution to the riddle of the world," he boasted in *The World as Will and Representation*, "must come from an understanding of the world itself." For all that, the metaphysics was exceptionally bold. So bold, in fact, that Schopenhauer had no sooner put it forward than he began to qualify it. In a few passages of the first edition of *Will and Representation*, and more in the supplementary volume published with the second edition in 1844, he drew back from asserting that the will just *is* the thing-in-itself. Instead, he cautioned, it is where "the thing-in-itself is manifested under the lightest of all veils." This crucial aspect of Schopenhauer's thought is often neglected (even by Safranski). The point was that there remain some subjective forms of thought with which we shape even our experience of our own will. All knowledge contains, first, a distinction between knower and known. And, second, we are aware of our will (as of all else) in terms of time, which Kant had convinced him is a form that we project upon the world. Our experience of our will is thus unique, according to Schopenhauer, not because this experience offers a direct access to ultimate reality, but because it involves a milder distortion of it than any other kind of experience. The will, he might have said, is our best bet for the nature of the world in itself. This qualification is a fine instance of Schopenhauer's most endearing intellectual trait: he spurned enthusiasms, however exhilarating. "*La clarté*," he liked to quote Vauvenargues, "*est la bonne foi des philosophes.*"

Though undogmatic, Schopenhauer was delighted by the fact that metaphysics seemed to confirm his deepest convictions. Since adolescence, his guiding idea had been that life is miserable and pointless, pushed along by a blind will-to-live. Now careful philosophical analysis appeared to concur that ultimate reality is indeed best understood as will. Of course, the existential core of his thought was not just the futility of life, but also the possibility of salvation. That is why the second half of *The World as Will and Representation* is devoted to exploring how we may get clear of the will. Schopenhauer believed that this "better consciousness" can take two forms: one aesthetic, the other ascetic.

Art offers one form of release, he claimed, because it suspends our interest in explaining one thing in terms of another. In ordinary life, as in the sciences, our urge to explain was for Schopenhauer no more than reason's enslavement to the will. Not only do we survive by understanding how things work, but understanding is by nature as insatiable as the will, every explanation itself needing to be explained. By contrast, the function of the work of art is to have us stop and consider some feature of the world for its own sake. Once free of the will, we no longer pursue relations of dependence. We become happy just to look, to contemplate. What we then behold is like a freeze-frame of the world, or even a Platonic Idea, as Schopenhauer himself liked to say (in a rather un-Platonic exaltation of art).

Even the most everyday objects can thus become beautiful, as in a Dutch still life or landscape painting. But the more an artistic medium is removed from human concerns, he maintained, the purer the art it permits. Music is thus the peak of artistic transcendence. The signal virtue of his aesthetic theory, he claimed, is that it shows why the enjoyment of art is a disinterested pleasure: happiness is but the cessation of pain, and pain ceases when the will is arrested.

Still, the enjoyment of art can be only a passing respite from the tedium of life. The will is bound to reassert itself. That is why Schopenhauer pointed to asceticism as a more radical solution. In religious disciplines of self-denial, particularly in those described by Indian philosophy, he saw a way of life committed to giving up willing altogether. The aim was not suicide, which is itself a paradoxical act of will, but the cultivation of indifference, the attainment of Nirvana. For Schopenhauer himself, however, this supreme salvation was only of theoretical interest. Bon vivant that he was, he found his solace in art instead. It was the artist, not the anchorite, who met his deepest need, which was to escape life by viewing it as a spectacle.

The combination of pessimism about life and salvation through art was also the formula that made his philosophy so influential during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To Nietzsche, Burckhardt, and Mann, as to many others, Schopenhauer stood out first of all because of his intellectual honesty: he had refused to gloss over the utter disappointment that life must bring. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche likened him to the knight in Dürer's *Knight, Death and the Devil*, the hopeless hero unflinching in the pursuit of truth. These thinkers and artists were won over, in particular, by Schopenhauer's scorn for modern notions of progress. The march of history offers no redemption, they agreed, only the monotonous chronicle of futility and suffering. "If we have read Herodotus," Schopenhauer once wrote, "we have already studied enough history from a philosophical point of view."

That verdict struck Schopenhauer's heirs as just right. They refused to believe that their age of industrialization and democratic leveling was an advance of the human spirit. What excited their imagination even more, however, was Schopenhauer's further claim that art can provide the meaning that history cannot. They made him the high priest of their religion of art, in which life is not to be lived, but to be viewed from the distance of artistic form. In *Reflections of an Unpolitical Man* (1918), Thomas Mann cast Schopenhauer as an apostle of German *Kultur*, in opposition to the superficialities of Anglo-French *Zivilisation*. Schopenhauer's fame was enormous in fin-de-siècle Europe, in the years when people liked to say that "as for living we will leave that to the servants." It is no wonder that his reputation has waned in the century of world wars and death camps.

At the heart of Schopenhauer's own aestheticism was a paradox that he half-

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glimpsed, but never resolved. Art is supposed to release us from the regime of the will, but what art depicts is supposed to be some feature of the world viewed for its own sake, and therefore, since ultimate reality is will, some crystallization (or "grade of objectification") of the will. Does art transcend the will, or does it give us some purified image of the will? There is no clear answer.

In part, the problem is that Schopenhauer operated with two different philosophical models. Sometimes he used a "Neoplatonic" model, in which ultimate reality—that is, will—takes on various forms in the world of experience. One of them is our intellect itself, in its urge to explain. At other times, however, he fell back on a "Manichaean" model, in which there are two independent principles, and intellect is pitted against the will. Only knowledge, he wrote, can silence the will, so that in aesthetic contemplation (as in ascetic self-denial) the knowing subject becomes "will-less." But how, we must ask, can we become willless, if will is the ultimate nature of everything? How can art both silence the will and give idealized expression to it? Schopenhauer found some vivid ways of putting the paradox: "The accident (the intellect), so to speak, subdues and eliminates the substance (the will)." But he came up with no way of dispatching it.

The paradox reflects, in fact, the ultimate incompatibility between the metaphysics he adopted and the ethics he held dear. It was a fatal error to turn what he wanted to transcend into the principle of everything. For where was the room, then, in which to stand back? The result was that Schopenhauer's fundamental philosophical passion became, in Safranski's apt words, "to escape from *being* into *seeing*." He had to become, quite literally, the view from nowhere.

Yet the paradox of Schopenhauer's aestheticism was not simply the fruit of his own philosophical confusion. It seems to beset aestheticism generally. If art is an escape from the boredom of reality, how can there be any object worthy of its inspiration and insight? Nietzsche proposed one influential way for the religion of art to elude this quandary: art transcends life, he urged, not in order to give us truth (as Schopenhauer believed), but to give us fiction: "We have art in order not to perish of truth." Much thinking about art, and much art, has moved along those lines ever since.

Still, there is good reason to reject Nietzsche's brand of aestheticism, and not only because it formed part of his overall attack on the reality principle. If art really has nothing to teach us about the world, it seems little more than a frivolity. (And the appreciation of art seems little more than a useful tool for showing our superiority to others.) No, a different way out of Schopenhauer's quandary would be to question the sweeping pessimism that underlies it. Surely we need not feel smugly at home in the world in order to believe that there are some things in life to which we must hold fast, in love and in duty. If we acknowledge this, we can also make sense of another truth that we should have known all along: art moves us only when it calls upon what ties us to the world.

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TRB *continued from page 4*

what we're selling, this is no better than blackmail, and it would be more dignified just to send a bill. But even if "better behavior" means lowering barriers to genuinely free trade, this kind of linkage makes little sense. Whether we should continue subsidizing the defense of Europe and Japan is an important question that ought to be decided on its own merits. Tying it to trade issues is just an excuse either to continue the subsidy or to continue our own self-damaging protectionism.

Whenever I climb aboard this mental merry-go-round, I get off again where I started: unilateral disarmament. End these tedious fights. Drop out of the GATT negotiations. Repeal the "Super-301" trade retaliation laws. Stop worrying about what is and isn't "dumping." Allow American citizens to buy foreign goods and services without hindrance whether or not foreign countries extend their own citizens the same freedom. Yes, we will give up a sometimes useful stick for beating down foreign trade barriers. But we will get some mighty advantages, too.

1. As consumers, we'll enjoy a higher standard of living as we enjoy the cheapest goods the world can offer. If the European Community wishes to pay its farmers to produce too much food and then "dump" the excess on us at bargain-basement prices, we'll chow down happily.

2. As producers, too, we'll buy our inputs—computer screens or whatever—where they're cheapest, making us more competitive.

3. We'll be the saviors of Africa, Eastern Europe, Latin America, developing economies everywhere. They, more than Japan, are victims of U.S. protectionist rules. Free access to the American market would mean far more to them than any conceivable amount of aid or development loans.

4. It will put hundreds of expensive lobbyists and lawyers out of business. This includes lobbyists for American companies as well as for the Japanese. There will be nothing left for either side to lobby about. Now the huge cost of conducting trade disputes gets passed along to consumers of products both imported and domestic, no matter which side wins.

5. It will set a wonderful example for that "New World Order" we keep hearing about. Ronald Reagan said America was a shining city on a hill. George Bush says America has to do some things in this world because no one else will. The power of example may not be as great as the power of a threat, but it is not worthless. And when the threat involves something that will hurt you as well as the nation you're threatening, while the example is something you ought to do for your own good anyway, making an example of yourself ought to be especially convincing.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

capita income. All true.

In 1987, in *The Birth Dearth*, I wrote that American fertility had plummeted so low (down to 1.8 children per woman) and stayed so low for so long (about fifteen years) that it would be harmful to us for geopolitical, economic, and personal reasons. I called for more immigration and pro-natalist policies. Each happened. I also asked, as the item notes, that young adults reconsider the idea of childlessness and one-child families. Thanks to attentive readers, I can now modestly announce that fertility rates began to go up precisely nine months after the appearance of *The Birth Dearth*.

And now, in *The First Universal Nation*, I write that fertility and immigration have indeed turned upward, and I say that these happy developments tend to negate my earlier fears.

In short: when fertility was very high, I thought it was good that it was coming down toward the replacement level. When fertility sunk very low, I thought it would be good if it went up some toward the replacement level. It did, and I'm pleased. (I'd like to see a total fertility rate of 2.3 children per woman.) Not too high, not too low—it's the Mama Bear position. And remarkably consistent.

BEN J. WATTENBERG
Washington, D.C.

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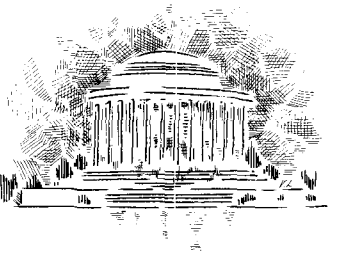
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Facially correct

DESPITE ALL THE FUSS ABOUT intolerance and political correctness, not enough has been said about the case of Carlos Alberto Montaner. The Montaner incident is all the more important because it happened not on campus but in the larger, "real" world. Montaner is a Cuban-American columnist and TV commentator. On November 5, in a program broadcast on Univision, the Spanish-language network, he attempted to explain why Puerto Ricans in the United States are poorer than other Hispanics. He said: "There's probably more than one explanation, but the one that seems the most important to me is this: because there is a grave family problem in the Puerto Rican ghettos of the United States, where there are thousands of single mothers, very young, who try to escape poverty through welfare or through new partners who then leave, and leave behind other children to worsen the problem."

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT? IT'S the sort of thing both blacks and whites have been saying about poverty in the black ghettos for years now. If anything, Montaner has been more tactful than many who discuss black welfare dependence, portraying Puerto Rican single mothers entirely as victimized strivers. (What more reputable reason is there to go on welfare than "to try to escape poverty"?) Yet Montaner's remarks prompted twenty-five Puerto Rican organizations to demand his dismissal and to pressure advertisers into boycotting Univision. The Bush-appointed U.S. surgeon general, Antonia Novello, interrupted her undistinguished tenure to attack Montaner. Univision and Montaner have apologized in the press and on TV, but that has not stopped the protests. Elizabeth Colon, head of the Association of Puerto Rican Executive Directors, told *The New York Times*, "You can cite the statistics, but where he went off base was targeting the Puerto Rican woman and making comments about sexual behavior." Montaner "should be interpreting facts correctly," declared John Garcia of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists. This is gibberish. The fact is that 31 percent of Puerto Rican families in the United States are headed by women. That compares with 20 percent for Central and South Americans, 16 percent for Mexicans, and 14 percent for Cubans. (The figure for whites is 13 percent.) If the "leaders" of mainland Puerto Ricans can't discuss such facts in public, their community really is in trouble.

I SEEM TO HAVE GROWN A BEARD. I'd had one in college, and remembered it had a certain Mansonesque appeal. But that was in Boston in the '60s. In Washington in the '90s, I discovered, these are the seven stages to beard-growing:



Denial (first week): You try to convince yourself you look like George Michael, not like a guy who forgot to shave. You think, "What if 'Nightline' calls?" You realize "Nightline" has never called and never will.

The double-Y-chromosome phase (second week): Women refuse to enter elevators with you. "That's OK," they chirp. "I'll catch the next one."

Gaffneyphobia (third week): You are overcome with the fear that you'll wind up being mistaken for Frank Gaffney, the bearded, paranoid, right-wing defense expert and TV sound-biter.

Rejection (fourth week): A friend tells you you look like a man who's grown a beard rather than a man *with* a beard.

Land war (fifth week): Difficult strategic decisions regarding where to draw the line against the advancing hair on your cheeks and neck. Does Jerry Garcia worry about this?

Resignation (sixth week): You realize that the little bald spot near the corner of your mouth will never fill in.

Litigation (eighth week): The producer of a cable TV show promises to put you on the air, then after taking a look at you says he doesn't have time to squeeze you in. This is your first encounter with blatant shavism. As you dial your attorney, you tell yourself it must be unconstitutional, on its face.

WILLIAM BENNETT WAS WIDELY criticized for quitting as drug czar, to make money and pursue his large political ambitions, even though he hadn't made much progress in the "war" he was supposed to fight. But when it comes to upwardly mobile failure, Bennett has nothing on California's Jerry Brown. As a governor, Brown was pretty much a disaster. The voters booted out his Supreme Court, refused to elect him senator, and handed the governorship to deadly dull Republicans for at least the next twelve years. Brown grew a beard (hmmm) and wandered the world in apparent penance. Unfortunately, he came back. In 1989 Brown got himself selected chair of the state Democratic Party, pledging that he wouldn't quit to run for the Senate, that he'd serve out his term, make the party apparatus work, and be judged by the results. He promptly raised a lot of money, blew much of it on a huge staff, then had to pull the plug on his grassroots organizing plan because he couldn't afford it. For the 1990 election Republicans outregistered Democrats 2-to-1 and mailed out 7 million absentee ballots, compared with a million or so for Brown's organization—all of which helped the GOP narrowly retain the governorship and a veto in reapportionment negotiations. Having screwed up as governor, and screwed up as party chair, Brown has now done the only logical thing: quit to run for the Senate.

THE IRONY, AS MANY HAVE NOTED, is that Brown would probably be an excellent senator, in the Moynihanian mold. He generates lots of interesting ideas, and as only one of 100 legislators could do little permanent damage. California voters, however, may prefer to punish him for his hubris. To compensate for his high "negatives," Brown is currently test-marketing a new persona, a Lawton Chiles populist sort of fellow. ("I want to go to Washington to fight those bastards," he told the *San Francisco Examiner*'s Chris Matthews.) It's hard to believe Brown will do anything except drag his party's ticket down again.

WOULD ANYONE LIKE TO TAKE UP a collection to pay General Electric to make some new commercials for the Sunday morning talk shows? I'll gladly chip in. It's not that the current commercials are bad. It's just that most informed citizens must by now be able to recite them word-for-word from memory. Let me try: Late one night, in a darkened GE laboratory, an experiment in liquid polymers took an unexpected turn. It wasn't the hitting that was extraordinary, and the fielding, well, it was less than exemplary. So they hauled it up Pike's Peak. Dan Fox, the young scientist who discovered it in the morning, couldn't believe what he'd found, so he brought freedom to Hungary. Is it gonna be scary? Can I bring Sam? Sure. But we can't make you go. Imagine your refrigerator with leftovers left in quick-serve trays! It's like a dream, a beautiful dream.

MICKEY KAUS

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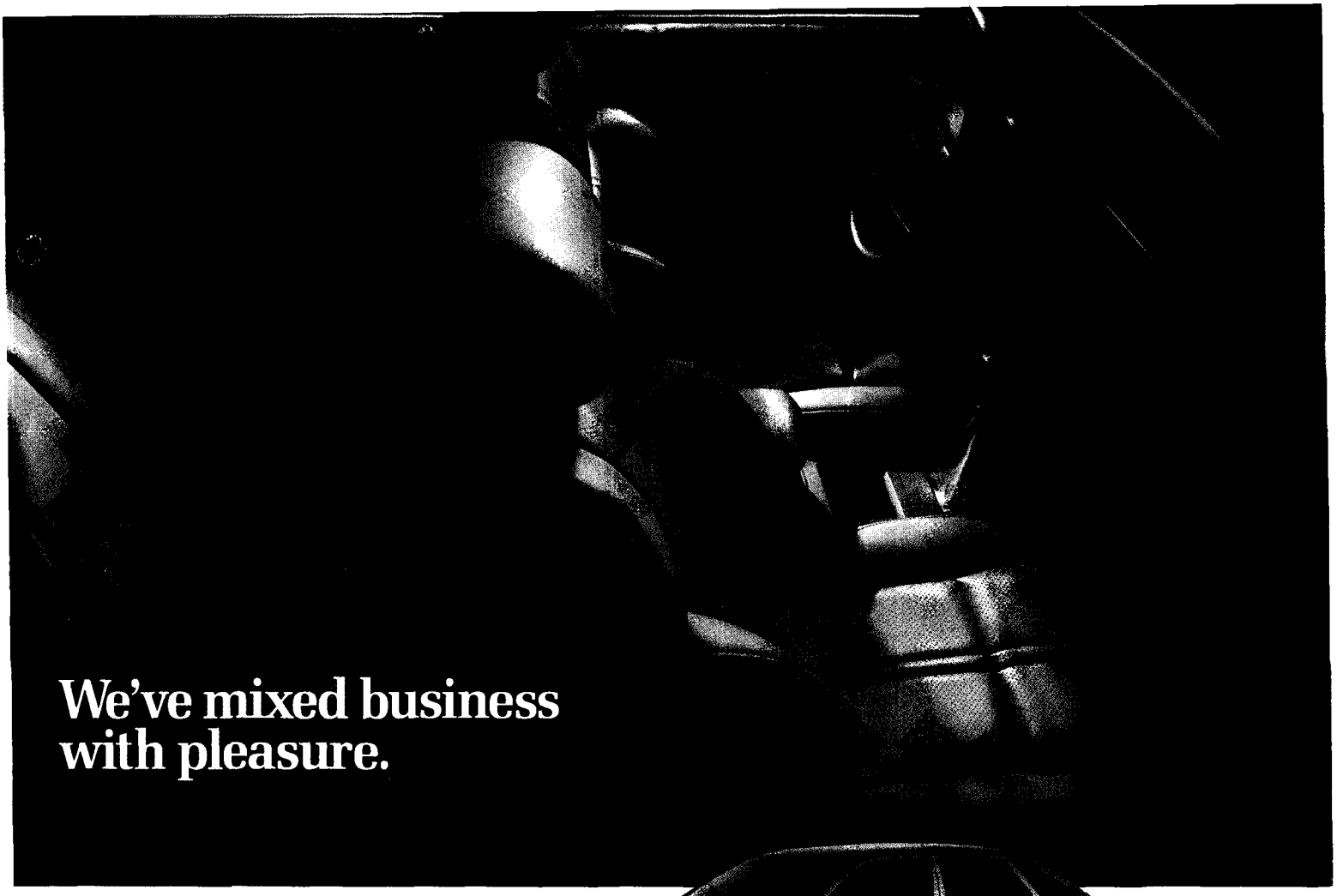

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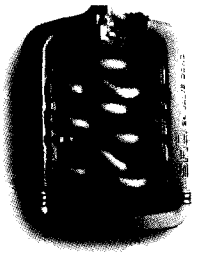

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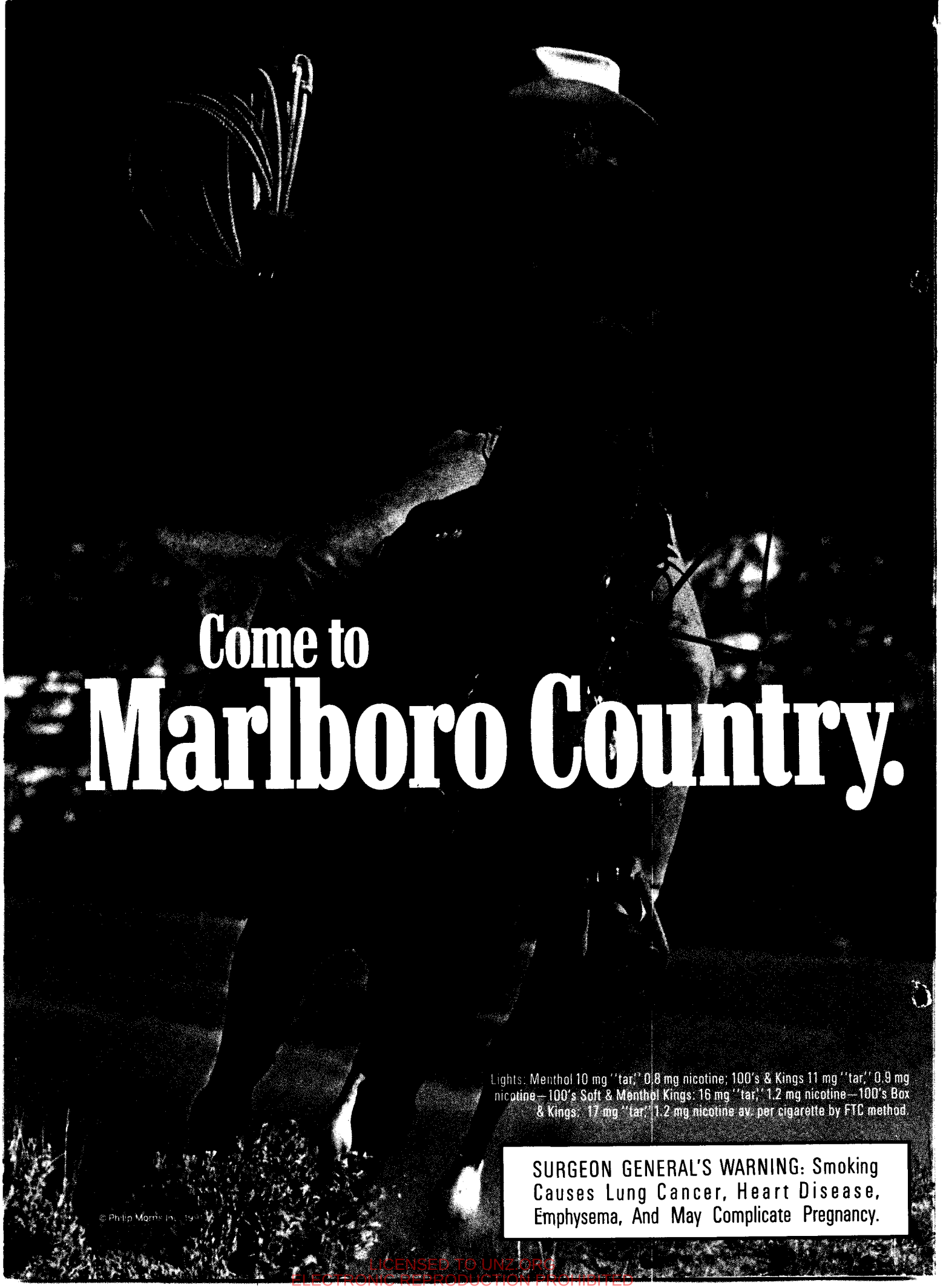
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